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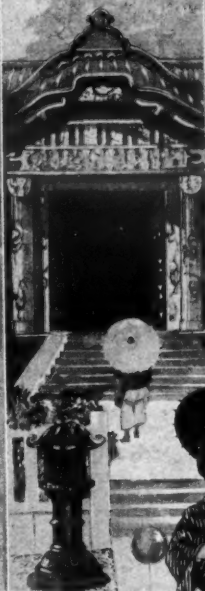
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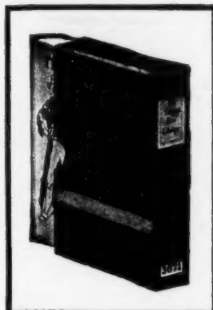
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VOL. XVIII

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It is like this: The Columbia Record, it is a tone photograph — minute, exact, delicate, artistic. These other records, they are like tin-types — flat, inartistic.

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Hear the Columbia and Cylinder Records in any of the Company's stores in all the large cities, or at the regular dealers everywhere, and compare with the same selections of any other make, and you will be convinced, like the Music Master, of the superiority of the Columbia record. Write for catalogue of Columbia Disc or Cylinder Records.

COLUMBIA PHONOGRAPH COMPANY, General

90 and 92 West Broadway, New York

Grand Prix, Paris, 1900

Double Grand Prize, St. Louis, 1904

ON THE LEE SHORE

BY BROUGHTON BRANDENBURG



WHEN the business day was over and the lights were lit in the peaceful valley town that lay at the foot of the hill, it was an un-failing sign of the hour that Colonel Denby Grier should come in a slow dignified fashion out of the great door of the hill house and seating himself in a big roomy porch chair light a long cigar which glowed through the evening like a great rosy firefly in the soft dark.

From my window a little farther down on the opposite side of the street I have watched the old banker countless times as he sat there tilted back, his foot against one of the huge colonial pillars, and on the steps descending to the terraced lawn before him would be the dim group of white and color, his three daughters and some of their friends. Perhaps the tall, graceful slender white figures moving about among the peony beds would be Grace and Carolyn, the older girls, while the animated elf that always clung close to her father's place in the evening time was certain to be Mildred, the child who in that day was shyly entering the mysterious world of womanhood. But no matter where they were dispersed at dusk, the later dark always found them clustered about their father's feet, and ever and anon until a late hour I could hear his resonant, drawling voice in one of those stories which had made him famous throughout the State.

The last time I was in Virginia I passed up the street and by the door of the old mansion. I stopped abruptly as it came into view above the thicket of lilac bushes that hedged the lower corner of the ground. A ruthless, marring hand seemed to have wiped from its prospect all of its rare old spirit, charm, and beauty.

The imposing white gateposts with their capitals were gone. The peony beds lay fallow, the steps were sagged, the pillars were hacked and scarred, the walks and the terraces sadly unkempt, and the sign of a boarding house hung before the open door. The familiar chair and its venerable occupant, the master of the house, the gay friends, and

the stately daughters were gone. I knew the story well. I was informed of each detail of the thing that had befallen the family on the lee shore, for the wreck is spoken of to this day in all the region, and so I was, I thought, fully prepared for the sight of the place, but I confess that I stopped short with a quick choke and stood for a moment looking abstractedly at the ghost of what had been.

It was the final chapter in a long lesson of protection of all that any man loves from what may befall it when he is no longer able to stand between his dearest and most treasured and the steady march of attacking circumstance. I am going to tell this story with its two wings that touch in conclusion. In fact in these latter days it has seemed to me that there was a commanding excuse for its being written, and now it shall be set down, perhaps spread broadcast, and may it do the good that seems to me to lie within its scope.

I first knew the old colonel and his attractive family through his sister, one of the finest types of the Southern gentlewoman it has ever been my privilege to encounter. She had married a New York broker, Edward Raymond, sprung of Connecticut Yankee stock, and a member of one of the best known firms in Wall Street. Their house on Madison Avenue was one in which the gracious unobtrusive hospitality of the South was blended perfectly with the exact and brilliant life habits of New York. There one met people who were distinctly interesting on their own account, and with Mrs. Raymond the power to attract a coterie which any woman of society might envy was never used for any purposes of family aggrandizement, but was merely recognized as the factor that brought to her door the friends about whom she really cared. Her days at home were a pleasure, where with other hostesses they might have been regarded as mildly unfortunate but necessary occasions.

Raymond in those days was, outside of his home, a hard, bold man of business, intent on building up a great fortune. I have been in his office at more than one critical hour on 'Change when he sat at his desk, quietly giving brief succinct orders, whose success

or failure meant almost everything to him, and yet his voice never seemed to change in those times, his kindly eyes rarely lifted from the papers before him, his unlit cigar was set at a precise right angle to the firm line of his mouth and jaw, and when his hands passed to execute some detail, to pick up a pen or a telephone receiver, they moved with the steady manner that meant certainty combined with wonderful alertness. He was the highest type of the efficient American business man in the crux of battle. When the crisis was over he would lean back, strike a match slowly, light his cigar, and let his mouth relax in an easy smile. This picture of him in that day I have drawn in this manner because I must pair it with another and a sadly different one later on.

One evening at a club dinner he met Senator John F. Dryden, of New Jersey, the head of the Prudential Life Insurance Company, and they spent some little time in the discussion of conservative New England investments in which both were deeply interested. Raymond in telling me of the occurrence next day said:

"I had always thought of insurance as a sound business, good enough for those whose families are dependent on their efforts, and also the cause of a violent mania which possessed certain persons called agents and evidenced principally by an unflinching persistence. No *personal* application of it had ever occurred to me. Of insurance officials I have had little acquaintance and mentally pigeonholed them as benevolent old gentlemen who would not discount twenty-dollar gold pieces under thirty days' notice, but in the Senator I found a man of fire and steel, just as keen as I or anyone I know in the accomplishment of his hands and brains, and within himself a perfect business dynamo, well governed and secure. Now, you know every man stands for a principle in his life work. Senator Dryden impressed me wonderfully and I decided to do honor to his principle, the principle of sound life insurance. I asked a friend to do me the favor of finding out for me if I could get written up for twenty-five thousand in his company."

It was not a difficult matter, Raymond being physically what is termed a good risk, in fact when I knew him many years later he still seemed such in every way. The policy was of the twenty-year endowment sort, and, as indicated above, was taken out in the Prudential Company.

It was merely a matter of chance that Raymond took this step and I know to a certainty that he forgot it completely only at stated periods, because matters, seemingly, a score of times of more importance were constantly before him. Quite different were the events which form the connecting link between this consideration and the pathetic story of the Griers.



U. S. SENATOR JOHN F. DRYDEN
President of the Prudential Insurance Co. of America.

The old colonel was of that provincial type of business man with an ancient style of letter book, and to whom the conduct of no deal was so important as to prevent the introduction of some long, whimsical, highly irrelevant darky story. He drove down to the bank an hour after it had opened each morning, and at noon climbed into the antique rockaway and went home. Perhaps he came down in the afternoon, perhaps he was off astride of Bay Ben visiting some of his many farms or galloping furiously along some of the hill roads laughing with the exhilaration of a boy.

One of the young clerks in the bank was the son of an old friend and was supplementing his slender pay by collecting commissions for Northern business houses, representing tobacco buyers in making contracts and soliciting life insurance. He was a reckless youngster,

and had asked the old colonel so frequently for the hand of Mildred, and been told with such regularity and emphasis that her father was not yet ready to give up his baby, and certainly not "to a cussed young splinter like him," that he had no hesitancy about approaching him on any subject.

One spring Colonel Grier had found that with his knowledge of tobacco-growing conditions, his widespread friendship with Virginia growers, and his excellent location, he could venture into speculation on the crop with much assurance of large profits. This he did, and one day when he had cleared a hundred thousand for a month's efforts, the clerk went into his desk, and the following conversation ensued according to the colonel's gleeful relation of it many times thereafter:

"Colonel, I thought I would come in to see you about something that concerns Miss Mildred's future."

"You just let her alone, young man, and the devil will lose his best means of harming her future."

"Well, I am interested in this, too. What right have I to allow you to fail to protect the future of the girl I am going to marry? Suppose you shot me in a moment of self-forgetfulness some day, as you have said you might do. Suppose business reverses and your being hanged should leave her penniless—"

"You audacious little cub—" gasped the nearly speechless colonel.

"I may be audacious, but those are cold facts, and I have come to ask you to take out a life-insurance policy in my company."

When the old banker had recovered from his rage, the whimsical humor and certain salt of sense in the situation appealed to him strongly and recalling the youngster he authorized him to procure a policy for \$5,000. The examiners found Grier to be a good risk. He was written up, and signed it over jointly to the young lover and his daughter, telling them they might have a basket picnic and a month's house party if they should come into the money by his demise. It was all done in his capricious jocular way.

A few months went by, and again the wheel of fortune had turned up for the colonel in still more extended tobacco speculations, and one day the young man broached the subject of increasing the amount of the policy.

One of the colonel's oldest friends, Judge Sam Tucker, was sitting with him swapping

tales of their boyhood, and both were in rare spirits. The visitor asked to see the policy, read it carefully, and then said:

"Denby, I never saw one of these before, but I tell you it is a fine thing. You can do it. Build it up to \$50,000 for the three girls. You are taking long chances on everything else. Give them a little protection."

"By George, I'll do it, Judge Sam," answered the colonel with a bang of his fist on the desk, and he did.

Raymond was handling the New York end of the successive deals that were being put through in tobacco by his brother-in-law, and spurred on by Raymond's boldness the colonel went farther and farther afield in his operations. The little bank and the farming business of his numerous tracts became very minor matters indeed. The people of the South were beginning to call Colonel Denby Grier the "Virginia Tobacco King," when suddenly the scene changed.

The spring of the year following the increase of the policy, the New York stock market turned on Raymond to pay up its old scores of raiding he had perpetrated upon it. His enemies saw he was hit and gathered together their full forces to batter and crush him if they could. In two weeks he was crippled. In a month he was approaching a crisis, and early in June he took train one Saturday, after the close of the Exchange, and hurried away to Virginia for a Sunday morning conference with Colonel Grier, who had not known thus far that Raymond was in any real danger.

It was a morning that I shall never forget. The beauty of the valley, clean washed by a heavy rain the night before, was that radiance of yellow sunshine, that white-flecked blue sky, and those stretches of brilliant varying green with white houses picked out among it, which have made June in that region famous. All the flowers but the tardy roses were in full bloom; the peonies made the terraces before the hill house seem one enormous burst of color hurled on a green velvet tapestry. The quiet of the Sabbath lay brooding over the town, and coming up the hill were little groups of neighbors returning from church. Mrs. Raymond had been staying with the Griers for the month, and she and the girls with some friends were just turning into the gate when she caught sight of her husband's white face as he and the colonel, standing before an upper window, saw our party and

turned away to come down. Instinctively she ran a little way up the walk to the wide-open door within which we could see the double stair and its old-fashioned turn and landing.

Vividly, as if it were an hour ago, I see the two men, so different in type, so utterly unlike in life, descending the steps, care and anxiety written on every feature of their faces.

Just at the landing, the colonel reeled, caught feebly at the rail, pitched forward as Raymond cried out in horror and caught vainly at his arm, and came crashing down the flight to lie bleeding and dead across his own threshold.

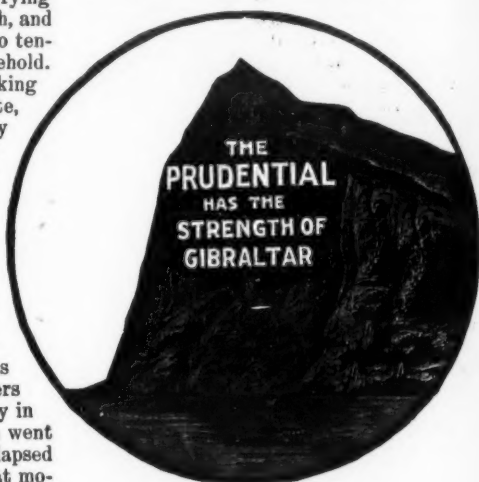
Still in my mind's eye I see the hurrying figures, hear the bitter cries of anguish, and watch the startled neighbors coming to tender their aid to the stricken household. Leaning against one of the pillars, looking off across the far hills of the old State, stood Raymond, his face like white clay and every line of his mouth and jaw so changed that I knew Fate held the victory over him.

The next day he was of necessity in the saddle again in New York, but all the tide was against him, his last bulwark was gone, and when the Exchange opened the next morning the first feature of the day was the announcement of the failure of the old firm of which he was the real head, and among the brokers who paused a moment—a moment only in their own affairs—the whispered truth went abroad that Edward Raymond had collapsed physically and mentally and was at that moment battling with death in an uptown sanitarium.

Strange to say he survived, but all his former powers of aggression were gone. When the entangled affairs of his house were straightened out it was found that the ruin was complete, and when the courts were through all that was left of the splendid fortune was a little house in a suburb of Brooklyn, in his wife's name, something she had bought intending to give it to a faithful servant some years before. There I saw them the last time—she sewing peacefully on the little porch, he pottering around the small lawn, looking after his pet plants and shrubs, the two of them living quietly and perhaps more happily than ever before on the \$1,200 per year which comes in from the invest-

ment of the \$25,000 which they received last winter when the endowment policy matured.

Of course the colonel's death left his tobacco deals half finished, his estate's losses through Raymond's failure did the remaining execution, and when the administration had cleared up the affairs of Colonel Denby Grier, the sole ward between his children and complete dependency, the only thing to keep his daughters from going into the town mills to earn their own living was the \$50,000 Prudential Insurance policy. In the words of old Judge Sam, the colonel's lifelong friend, a poor man himself, "It stood out like a chimney tower above the blackened ruins of a mansion that had been swept by fire."



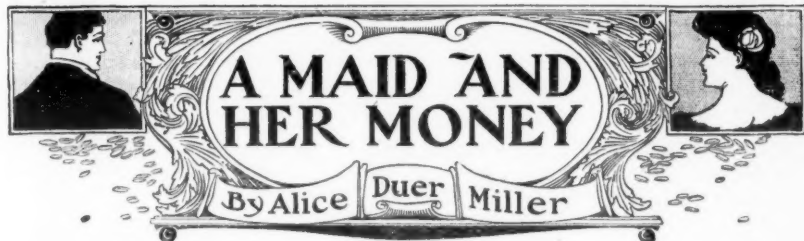
So, it seems to me, the lesson is complete. In setting it forth I am glad it redounds to the benefit of that great institution which in the stress of a late hysterical day has not been found vulnerable to assault any more than that mighty Rock, the impregnable Gibraltar, the Keeper of the Eastern Gate, whose stanchness it has taken for its emblem. The principle is good and the millions who have their welfare bound up in the conduct of this company have shown their complete approval of that same conduct. I cannot forget the monition in the sight of Colonel Denby Grier at the height of a noble and unsullied career of success, plunging down to lie white and silent before the eyes of those entirely dependent on his continued existence.

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THERE used to be at one time a good deal of speculation as to Marie Louise's first sensation when she heard she had inherited a fortune. Pringle Peale always declared that she had formed the notion instantly of modeling herself upon the Queen of Sheba; whereas little Miss Whitney, the trained nurse, insisted that she had intended from the start to devote herself to the welfare of others—witness the children's hospital.

Marie Louise's first conscious thought had been: Now, when I travel, I shall always go in the parlor-car.

It is hard to see why hitherto a parlor-car had represented to her an offensive class distinction, for she did not seem to suffer at all from her total neglect by the upper circles of Stonehurst society; and it need not be supposed, because the town's population comprised only some fourteen thousand souls, that social strata were less differentiated than elsewhere.

The aristocrats, for the most part, lived on Park Slope. Here literary clubs met, here carriages rolled in a long procession whenever a distinguished visitor was to be entertained, here euchre-parties had always taken place, and of late, for Stonehurst was

nothing if not modern, bridge had begun to be studied; and the great shop at the corner of Mohawk and Broad Streets kept a whole window filled with hitherto unsalable articles, now invitingly labeled, "Bridge Prizes."

But all these forms of activity took no account of Marie Louise. Now and then, when the young men of the Institute gave a dance—a hop, it was generally called—one of them would invite Marie Louise, and she would to all appearances mingle with those who felt themselves her superiors. It was only an appearance. She had no claim on their attention. She was not pretty enough to be universally championed by brothers; and her habit of hanging all day long over her own front gate, combined with her occasional disregard of the rules of grammar, caused mothers to avoid her and to describe her as a "lazy," and, I am afraid, "common little piece."

Then, also, at the Institute hops her dresses were very much against her. All the best taste of Stonehurst was in favor of white muslin; and when the daughter of the president of the Institute added a salmon-pink sash, it was felt that she had gone as far as could be approved. On one occasion Marie Louise's flame-colored muslin, and on another her black and white, would only have been excused if their perfec-

tion of detail had atoned for their violence; but, as she constructed them herself, this perfection was exactly what they lacked. Then her clear, cheerful laugh, and her enthusiastic manner of dancing, rendered her so conspicuous that the rumors soon began to creep about that she was very flirtatious. The deduction which was made by the chaperons was that there is only one reason why a female desires to attract attention. This desire was plainly present in Marie Louise.

Yet, to be just, she cared as little for men as she did for society. The thing she enjoyed was her idea of herself. Her greatest pleasure was in looking at herself from an outsider's point of view, and admiring, almost envying. She liked, now and then, to imagine herself a spoiled beauty, going from partner to partner, surrounded by men, tossing a word here, a smile there; bestowing life or death by a glance given or withheld. At the moment she was willing to sacrifice anything to fill in this picture. The clear laugh and the cherry-colored dress helped her, and were no more designed for the delight of the students than for the chaperons, or for any of the rest of the background. The next day she hardly took the trouble to bow to her partners when she met them in the street, or when they passed her as she stood with her elbows on the gate.

The house was set back from the street—a wooden structure built of scalloped shingles, painted a deep slate color. The plot before the house had had two flower-beds in it during the days when Mr. Carman had cared to reside with his family. Now even the grass had faded away in patches under the maple-trees that stood on each side of the gate.

Here in summer, it must be admitted, that Marie Louise was too apt to be found, though quite as often she was flying along upon her bicycle (on which she was wonderfully proficient), her hands holding on a large flapping hat, and her lips pursed up for a whistle, which the wind of her rapid progress kept carrying away.

In the winter, when her mother was occupied with the dressmaker, who was also a friend, Marie Louise read. She read nothing but fiction, and was acknowledged a connoisseur. A book recommended by her was certain to contain a measure of that unsettling and haunting thrill, which some say is the object of true romance. There were several girls not so well-versed in current novels who habitually asked at the free-library for the book that Marie Louise had last returned.

One of these followers, more acute than the others, once observed that Marie Louise recommended only those books in which the heroines were like herself, but was promptly snubbed. Where could any resemblance be found between these princesses in distress and Marie Louise? The girl was told she spoke foolishly.

Yet, in a measure, she was right. Marie Louise's imagination saw magnificent glimpses of herself in these romances. She considered herself far from good-looking, but was always hoping that some day she would discover a style of dress that would gather her beauties and defects into one tremendous, decided effect. She had passed through the period of large, flapping black hats, for they concealed her greatest advantage, her hair. More recently a Byronic manner had attracted her—parted hair and low collars and flowing ties. This, at least, had the merit of showing her round young throat.

From her father, who was of Welsh descent, she had inherited her hair—a splendid golden, streaked with red and silver. Unfortunately, nature had selected the paler shade for her eyebrows. They were almost indistinguishable. It was her greatest sorrow. The rest of her face did well enough, fair-skinned and softly modeled, but lacking in all distinction and character owing to these unfortunate brows. Once, in the privacy of her own room, she had blackened them well with a burnt match, and had been almost startled to see her eyes on the instant grow dark and colored like sapphires.

For her own part, she admired dark, sinister coloring, and would have yielded herself even more ecstatically to life if she had been a mysterious-looking brunette. Her confidence in brown women might have been shaken by the experience of her mother—a dark, plump person—who had not succeeded in holding the affection of her Welsh husband. She was daughter of the cashier of the Stonehurst Bank, and it had been thought an astonishingly good match for Carman when he had come there an utter stranger, for she was not only well-connected, but known to be a conscientious and competent housekeeper.

Perhaps Carman had no true strain of domesticity in him. He appeared to be fond of his little daughter, whenever he was at home with a free mind, but these occasions were rare. His money difficulties began to press upon him. Marie Louise was only five years old when he left home by night, and never returned.

She did not remember him at all. She had the common infantile trick of leading her own complete and absorbing existence—as busy as a little ant's—far below the lives of the two grown-ups, whom she dutifully called parents while hardly aware of their presence.

She did not remember him, but afterward, when she was about thirteen, hearing a rumor that was creeping about the town to the effect that her father was ruined, she was moved to write him a letter of condolence. Her soft heart was touched. She did not know what ruin was, but it sounded terrible. She and her mother were poor enough on the little allowance the cashier afforded them, but to be actually in want—

She never received any answer to her letter, unless seven years later the terms of his will could be considered as such.

She and her mother had heard some weeks before of his death. Certainly Marie Louise never thought of its profiting her in any way. Her mother said nothing, if the idea had occurred to her.

The morning that the girl received

the communication that made her an heiress was just like any other. Marie Louise herself received the letters, and soon noticed that there was one in a typewritten envelope for her. It was dated from a law-office in the town where her father had lived.

At first she could take in nothing but the fact that her father had made a fortune, and left it unreservedly to her. Afterward she had time to consider that the letter itself was a very kind one. It was signed Silas Mullins, and told her that the writer was not only her father's lawyer, but his old friend. It expressed a desire to be of service to her, and a readiness either to continue to look after her interests, or to turn them over to any one she might designate.

Needless to say, Marie Louise had no wish to improve on her father's arrangements. From this time on, "Mr. Mullins, my father's lawyer," figured not a little in her conversation.

On the whole, the news excited her no more than it excited the town at large. To Marie Louise her fortune was more a contribution to her romantic personality than anything else. Instead of saying to herself: "If I were rich, I should—" she now said: "Some day I will—" but the prophecies were almost as far away as ever.

It was Mrs. Carman who first suggested that they might build a house. Marie Louise had responded warmly with all the feminine instinct for material creation; and began at once to dream of a palace with columns, which, erected on Park Slope, would make the Institute look like a country school-house.

Leaning over the gate, she received the congratulations of her friends. The street was a well-trodden one.

First came Bobby Peters—the nearest approach to a lover that Marie Louise had ever had. With him on summer evenings she was accustomed to sweep the country on her bicycle. He was a serious-minded young man, interested in questions of the day and apt to lend her books, whose names she afterward saw quoted in the papers. She invariably returned them unread,

too lazy even to pretend to an acquaintance with them—a frivolity which at first alienated him, until her profound femininity again won upon him and forced him to the conclusion that nature had not intended women to think.

He took off his small felt hat with mock ceremony.

"I come to salute the heiress," he said. "She will not remain long with us, I apprehend. New York, I fear——"

"What nonsense, Bobby," returned Marie Louise. "I never thought of going to New York." But she entirely lost his reply in excitement at the mere suggestion. After all, why not New York? Was not the metropolis the proper place for her? Her mother could not again rouse her interest in the house on Park Slope.

Oddly enough, however, her vividdest realization came to her when her clergyman—a Methodist—failed to pass her by with the faint, tolerant smile of greeting which was her due as his parishioner. Her relation to her church had been the slimmest. Once, some years before, she had helped to give out ice-cream at a picnic, and had been the greatest success with the small boys. She had hardly, with this exception, exchanged two words with her spiritual master when he came, as he often did, to see her mother.

Now he stopped and began to talk frankly about his charities. He told her simply a tragic enough case. He needed fifty dollars for immediate relief. It occurred to him that she might find particular happiness in giving just at this minute.

She found particular happiness in the sense of importance that came to her in being asked. She had always respected and feared old Mr. Alden, and yet here he was talking to her on as serious a subject as if she had been old Miss Cotes, who was the pivot of all feminine organizations in Stonehurst. Perhaps not even Miss Cotes would be asked so lightly for fifty dollars—as if it were a quarter.

Not only Christian pity moved her.

She lifted her elbows from the gate and stood erect with bent head. Many Ladies-Bountiful might have studied her manner with advantage as she answered that as yet her bank-account stood at the ten dollars from which it had not varied since she was born. As soon as she received her inheritance he might count on her.

Never perhaps in all her subsequent career did she feel more regal.

With this mood still upon her, she presently banged the gate behind her and darted down the street to the house of her dearest friend, Miss Glynn was confined in bed with a severe cold, but undaunted by this intelligence, Marie Louise rushed from the front door to her friend's bedside. They embraced with little groans and squeaks of excitement, followed by more articulate expressions: "My dear," "Only think," "Oh, Dodo," "Oh, Mamie Lulu," and the like.

"Oh," cried Dora, "I know I shall soon see you in the *Star*. Last evening Miss Carman entertained a large party at dinner. The president of the Institute and Mrs. Hicks, Miss Cotes——"

"Indeed, I won't have Mrs. Hicks," said Marie Louise; "she said I dressed like a nigger minstrel."

"Shall you move to Park Slope?" asked Dora, with round-eyed wonder at the magnificence of the mere idea. "Or perhaps we are not grand enough for you at all in Stonehurst, and you will want to live in Pitney."

"Pitney!" said Marie Louise, with vast contempt, although hitherto the hall-mark of the nearest large town had been quite sufficient to hallow any article in her eyes. "Hardly! If I moved away from here I certainly should not go to Pitney."

"You don't mean New York!" shrieked Dora. "Oh, Mamie, I could not bear to have you become a horrid, stuck-up New Yorker."

Marie Louise did not stop to assure her friend that whatever happened she would not become stuck-up, but she was not offended at the suggestion. She smiled.

"I don't think I see mommer in New York, somehow," she returned.

"Shall you have an automobile?"

"Of course," said the other, though she had never even considered the subject before. "Are they very expensive? Of course they are, but it does not matter. That is so funny. That it does not matter what anything costs. We'll take it out every evening. I'll run it myself, and we'll take you and Gus and Bobby when he isn't *too* dull. But that is not what I came to say, Dolly dear. I want to give you a dress. Any kind you like." She waved a comprehensive circle. "Just lie here and think of the most beautiful one you can; white satin with stars, or green with water-lilies. Anything. I can't bear to think of your having to use up all those ugly remnants your grandmother is always buying. I like you in pink best."

"Oh, Polly Lulu," cried Dora, giggling in an excitement that was better than thanks; and she added, after a solemn moment of reflection: "To think that you can do anything in the world you want to!"

Marie Louise nodded. She saw nothing in the statement that required qualification.

II.

The Board of the New York Hospital for the Contagious and Infectious Diseases of Children was to meet one clear, dusty, windy morning in November at the house of one of its original members. Almost all its members were original; ten years had made but little difference in its personnel. Not only work accomplished, but some real dangers run, held it together with a coherence not usual in charities accounted fashionable. One of its greatest triumphs had been the discovery, at the beginning, of the Reverend William Watson Joyce—not then known for the wonderful preacher and organizer that he is now acclaimed. For eight years he had been their chairman.

Mrs. Orvice was a widow between forty and fifty—forty, one said, to judge by her looks; fifty, when one saw her son. She was still so lovely that

no one ever thought of remarking that she had once been a beauty. She had kept her eyes and her figure, and the former, looking out from a face beginning to be lined, beneath hair beginning to turn gray, were as clear and Brilliant as a little patch of blue sky on a cloudy day.

Doctor Joyce, leaning forward, was saying to the five ladies and one gentleman who had assembled:

"This meeting was called, my dear friends, for two purposes, to fill the place of the dear lady who will be such a loss to all of us, and to consider ways and means for raising money for the new building, of which we stand, as you know, in such dire need——"

"Well," interrupted a little plump lady, sitting by the door, "all I say is—not a garden-party." She was suggestive of anything but charity. Her nodding plumes, pearl earrings, and spotted veil were plainly of this world. Her skin was smooth but coarse-grained, and her bright little eyes looked out unrelieved by eyebrows. "Shall you ever forget the way we worked for that other one? And such a rain! Every time they read about the deluge in church, I think I know how it began. And how did we come out? Ten dollars to the bad. To the good, was it?"

"I don't think, Miss Bowles," said Doctor Joyce gently, "that, after our unfortunate experience, any one is likely to advocate another garden-party."

"Well, if they do, I certainly sha'n't agree," returned Miss Bowles. "I was thinking of a play, something clever and improper, that the authorities would not let you produce if it were not for charity."

Doctor Joyce had come to feel some pride that he, and not Miss Bowles, should conduct the meeting, and he now said in the low but commanding voice of a man accustomed to filling great spaces:

"I believe our first business is the election of a member to this board. What suggestions have you to make? You remember we were all to give the matter some thought before we met again."

Miss Bowles tapped the arm of her chair. "I give you my word," she said, "that it has never crossed my mind from that day to this. However, it does not matter, for I am always pestering my friends to come on this board, but they have their own charities. People are so selfish."

The other ladies and Mr. Peale, the treasurer, had not been so forgetful. Several names were suggested, but without conviction, and when the possibilities appeared to be exhausted, Doctor Joyce himself spoke. He was a middle-aged man with prominent brown eyes like a spaniel, and a complexion so transparent that it showed a change of color whenever he spoke. It showed a most decided change now.

"If no one else has any further suggestion," he said, "I have a candidate to propose. I have in mind a young lady, energetic, generous, and excessively rich——"

"It sounds almost too good to be true," said Miss Bowles. "Let us elect her by all means. Who is she?"

"Her name is Carman—Miss Marie Louise Carman." Doctor Joyce looked almost guiltily about the room, but it was evident that, with the exception of Miss Bowles, no one could connect the name with anything.

It was Miss Bowles who answered: "What, not the girl who used to drive about Newport in a white victoria all last summer?"

"Miss Carman was, I believe, at Newport last summer," Doctor Joyce answered; and he added with an irrepressible smile: "I think it extremely likely that her equipage was white."

"Oh," cried Miss Bowles. "I used to feel so sorry for that girl—driving up and down the Ocean Drive in such beautiful clothes—and such horses! And not a soul knew her—— Well, Doctor Joyce, no one would dispute *your* selection, anyhow. Let's vote."

But to have his selection disputed was just what Doctor Joyce desired. He explained that he had met Miss Carman only once or twice—she had taken a pew at his church, and seemed very eager to do good.

"Do you know if she would be willing to serve, if we did elect her?" asked Miss Bowles. "It is so flat to elect people, and then to have them say——"

Doctor Joyce colored again, but replied that he could only say that he *believed* that Miss Carman would be glad to serve on any board to which she was elected.

In the pause that followed, it was evident that Mr. Peale—Prixley Peale, the treasurer—was about to speak. He was a thin, good-looking man, who carried his forty years so well that he still looked young. One had only to look at him to know that he was a well-to-do bachelor, so wary of the wiles of the gentler sex that he could enjoy without yielding to them; the sort of man who, if he asked you to dinner, would, you know, instantly present you a much more perfect entertainment than any feminine head of a house could provide. The board felt immensely flattered by his presence, for he was a busy lawyer. He had come on, two or three years before, to replace an earnest but puzzle-headed lady, whose habit of subtracting her balance had long deceived the board as to the state of the treasury.

Mr. Peale, encouraged by a smile from Doctor Joyce, now expressed his opinion that the great strength of the board lay in its homogeneity, that it was often more of a disadvantage than an advantage to have one conspicuously rich member, as all outsiders immediately felt absolved from any further donations, and that, for his part, he believed in a conservative attitude, and, although he had never seen Miss Carman, he would advise the board to consider any such election with the greatest care.

The board had the deepest respect for the opinions of Mr. Peale, and there was a short silence, during which, quite plainly, every one was dutifully considering, when suddenly the door opened. For an instant no event followed, so that every one had time to wonder what dilatory member of the board was about to make an appearance. Then, with a great rustling, and something of

the smooth motion of a train rounding a curve at full speed, Marie Louise herself entered.

No one but Doctor Joyce had the faintest notion who she was, and all were so astonished at the unexpected appearance of so much height, figure, and golden hair, that they lost even so much self-consciousness as to be aware that they were staring.

Miss Carman herself became aware of it, and stumbled in her quick approach over the front of her dress (which was indeed inordinately long in accordance with the fashion); she gasped a little, sat down, and just as the reverend doctor had so far recovered from his surprise as to be able to say: "Ladies, Mr. Peale, let me introduce Miss Carman," she rose hastily to her feet.

"I don't believe I ought to have come," she said; and would have been out of the door, if Mrs. Orvice had not stopped her. It was indeed pathetic to see one, who an instant before had entered like a victorious empress, about to leave like a shy child.

The board, while feeling that some explanation was due them for so unparliamentary an incident, attempted to convey that it was from their chairman that they expected it, and tried to be civil to the unfortunate intruder. All, at least, except the culprit himself, who was endeavoring to achieve an explanation that would shift the blame from his shoulders without placing it too obviously on Marie Louise's, and Peale, who, under an absolutely blank exterior, was debating whether or not it was possible to blackball a lady in her very presence.

The matter was settled, as usual, by Miss Bowles.

"Oh, sit down, Miss Carman; sit down," she said, leaning forward, very erect from the waist up, and nodding encouragingly at the girl. "Most fortunate coincidence, I'm sure—you're coming—saves me the trouble of sending you a notice of your election. I move that the secretary be empowered to cast a unanimous vote for Miss Carman. Mrs. Orvice would say 'an unani-

mous,' wouldn't you, Anne? Now do let us get to the really serious business. It's almost time for lunch as it is."

During the discussion of ways and means that followed, an opportunity was afforded to the stunned board to observe its new member. She sat up very straight, turning conscientiously from one speaker to the other in punctual succession; but her eyes had a tendency to rove sideways, as if she were not unaware that she was being studied.

They were soon of one mind as to her being a beauty, noting the extraordinary contrast between her hair and her eyebrows, which ran a fine black line almost completely across her brow, giving, above her clear blue eyes, a strength and character to her face rarely seen in blondes of her coloring. She was dressed in different shades of brown and orange. Her dress brown cloth, her furs red-fox, her hat an orange-colored bird, whose creation no naturalist would ascribe to nature. Miss Bowles, under pretense of copying some of Peale's figures, leaned over and whispered, "The slippers." After a discreet interval, the treasurer allowed his eyes to sink until a pair of high-heeled Russia leather slippers, with buckles like a pair of copper boilers, dawned upon his view; nor did the lemon-colored silk stockings, embroidered in orange, entirely escape his attention. He would not, however, give Miss Bowles, who was watching him hopefully, the satisfaction of a change of expression. His eyes merely returned to his book, and after a moment she also gave her attention to the discussion in hand.

One of the elderly ladies in the corner was saying:

"Every one always seems to enjoy music so much. If we could give a concert, perhaps the singers would give their services, and a manager might give the theater, and——"

"And what should we make?" interrupted Miss Bowles. "We'd be lucky if we cleared a thousand dollars, to say nothing of our own bills for nervous prostration. No, if you want money

nowadays you have got to ask for it. What's two hundred thousand dollars, anyhow? If this board doesn't know two hundred men who would give a thousand dollars apiece to such a cause, well, then all I have to say is we ought to be ashamed of being New Yorkers."

"It is rather embarrassing to ask for money when you offer nothing in return," said Mrs. Orvice.

"Not so embarrassing as to offer something that no one wants," rejoined Miss Bowles. "Who cares for concerts? I hate them, and I think most people do. I have no ear for music, and I don't want to have it brought home to me."

Somebody asked if it were absolutely necessary to have a new building immediately, which brought out so vivid a description of the defects of the present hospital, that Marie Louise saw on the instant her opportunity to redeem the awkwardness of her entrance.

Her face lit up, and, blinking her eyes rapidly once or twice, she began eagerly:

"Oh, if you want a new building, won't you let me give it to you? It would be such a pleasure. I mean it wouldn't be a bit of trouble."

There was a momentary silence; then Doctor Joyce, who was probably more accustomed than any one else present to accepting or refusing gifts of two hundred thousand dollars, answered:

"My dear Miss Carman, you are most kind, most generous. But I am afraid we cannot take advantage of your offer."

Miss Carman was surprised and hurt. She could not see why not. Doctor Joyce attempted to explain that until she had consulted with her natural guardians, her lawyer, her family—

"I have no family except my mother," said Miss Carman, and sat a moment drooping like a beautiful orphan, and then added: "Oh, I see, you think I can't afford it. But I can, really I can."

"We should have to insist that at least your lawyer—" Doctor Joyce began, but she interrupted again.

"I haven't even a lawyer," she said;

"at least not in this part of the world. My lawyer is Mr. Silas Mullins, of Chrystal City. Perhaps you know him?"

The board confessed its ignorance in this respect, and the meeting contrived to adjourn without accepting Marie Louise's offer, and yet without hurting her feelings again by a more definite refusal.

Immediately the dining-room doors opened, for it was the established custom for the board to stay to lunch after the meeting, and luncheon was announced. Miss Carman made another flurried effort to depart, but Mrs. Orvice was too tender-hearted to be other than cordial.

Miss Bowles looked round the room, and asked severely:

"Isn't Jerry coming home to lunch?"

His mother shook her head. "No," she said. "He fears this board. He says that 'divided we're grand, but that united we pall,' and not even the prospect of seeing you, dear Serena, could induce him to come."

"Well, I am sorry," said Miss Bowles. "I wanted to ask him to lunch with me on Sunday. Will you come, Miss Carman, very informally? I never give parties."

"I am sure I shall be delighted," returned Marie Louise, trying not to seem too eager; "at least, if I have no engagement, and I am almost sure I haven't." She might well be sure, for this was the first invitation she had received since she left Stonehurst, where they had not been so particularly numerous, either.

"Tell Jerry, Anne," Miss Bowles went on, to Mrs. Orvice, "that the Bill Emmonses are coming. I suppose that will please him. Isn't it absurd the way you have to bribe men nowadays to come to your house? I asked Jerry to dine four times last month, and he answered: 'My dearest Miss Serena, I am going nowhere at present.' It sounded so mysterious, but I asked his man, and he said he had not dined at home once in two weeks. There you are. I wasn't offended. No one can be angry at Jerry."

"Indeed I can," said his mother; "and very often am."

"I couldn't ever be angry at any one so extraordinarily good-looking. Have you ever seen him?" She had turned to Miss Carman. "I'll just fetch a picture of him." She returned to the drawing-room and came back with a photograph in her hand, and gave it with a gesture of eloquence to Marie Louise.

Perhaps the mischief was done then and there. Marie Louise had never conversed with any more alluring specimen of the opposite sex than Bobby Peters. The photograph was not a professional effort. It represented a young man in riding-clothes, sitting on a bench in a wood, with a pipe in his mouth. Her first idea was that he was not at all handsome, and that it must be entirely her own individual discovery that he had the most attractive of faces. There had always been to her something glossy and pertaining to the frock coat in any acknowledged type of masculine beauty. She had long kept a picture, cut from a magazine, of a certain disturbingly beautiful and well-dressed actor. She had sometimes imagined what would be her sensations if she suddenly found him (she had never seen him, even upon the stage) in the midst of addressing her in phrases of passionate affection. Short of this, however—and this did not really seem very likely to happen—she felt no particular interest in him. Whereas, Orvice's picture suggested that it would be very pleasant just to meet him, and talk to him. And Sunday she was going to meet him! The fact gave her the keenest pleasure; keener even than the prospect of seeing the Emmonses, though a minute before that had seemed almost the summit of human bliss.

The Emmonses were a young couple whom she, as well as some thousand other newspaper readers, knew very well by name. Marie Louise had great faith in the social items in the papers, and when she had supplemented them by the opinions of her manicure, who was exact, conscientious, and possessed of a good memory and an excellent

clientele, she felt that she understood not a little of the distinctions of the society she longed to enter. She often regretted that its background was a democracy. She wished, with singular simplicity, that it could be regularly organized, like English society, where one must be able to detect distinctions so easily as soon as one had mastered the order of titles. Of course, a duke must be just so much smarter than an earl, and an earl than a viscount. She tried sometimes to measure positions by such a standard here. There was Miss Bowles, who wouldn't have any title at all; and Mrs. Orvice, who would certainly be an earl's daughter, the Lady Anne Orvice, and the Emmonses, who would be equivalent, she thought, to a smart young duke and duchess, just succeeded to the title.

The invitation gave just the fillip to her self-esteem that she needed in order to enjoy herself. She was soon supporting the greater part of the conversation, in spite of Miss Bowles. Even Peale, whose attention to her had been very languid, found himself drawn into the whirlpool of her talk.

Yet everything has its reaction, and the joy of holding an audience entranced will not always bear the scrutiny of the next morning. Marie Louise could have written eloquently on the pleasures of the imagination, for perhaps her greatest delight in life was to imagine an attitude on the part of her hearers and then to live up to it. Now, she flattered herself that they were finding her a brilliant, amusing, original intruder into their well-ordered, but somewhat dull, little hierarchy; and she responded freely to the notion. But, alas! she had hardly reached her own door before she began to suspect that she had seemed merely "a vulgar, talkative little piece." Of course they had all laughed, but was it with, or at, her? She groaned aloud and wrung her hands. Why had she told them how she asked the conductor on the train where, if he could choose, he would buy a house in New York? Why had she told that, when he had selected Murray Hill, she had never

heard of it? It was well enough to ignore it from a fashionable point of view, but she ought to have known the historic story of the retreat of the American troops. The newspaper controversy that had sprung up from her desire to know its precise boundaries was repeatable, was even amusing, but why, oh, why had she talked unrestrainedly about herself from the middle of lunch until she took her departure? How much she had told them, and what did she know in return? Absolutely nothing of them. She resolved never again to mention her own doings and sayings in public.

And, as if to test her resolution, she found a young woman waiting for her in the drawing-room; admitted, at what provocation we shall never know, by her highly recommended butler—Miss Wales, of the New York *Watch-Dog*.

For the first time in her life she was about to be interviewed.

III.

Kindness of heart is one of the virtues which is made to do duty for many minor faults, and when Marie Louise opened the Sunday *Watch-Dog* on the morning of the day on which she was to lunch with Miss Bowles, she really feared she had erred through too easy amiability. A full-length portrait of herself in evening dress took up one of the outside pages, labeled, "*Miss Marie Louise Carman, multimillionaire, philanthropist, and debutante.*" The rather weak climax did not strike Marie Louise, who was taken up with the second word in the series. She could hardly believe, as she saw it in print, that she had allowed herself to mention her offer to the hospital board before it had even been accepted.

"They are so fiendishly clever, mommer," she had explained to her mother—"these reporters."

Unquestionably the representatives of the press have their abilities, but there had been something extraordinarily soothing to Marie Louise, fresh from a group of people who made her feel crude and unimportant, in the point of

view of one who never questioned that it was greatness to live in a marble-fronted house, and magnificent to buy without asking the price.

Mrs. Carman sat down and laughed, or, rather, chuckled faintly, at her daughter's discomfiture. Detachment could not have gone further.

"They never bothered me but once. When your father ran away, Mr. Keats, of the *Stonehurst Star*, came round to see me, but I just said: 'Mr. Keats, I ain't a-going to tell you anything,' and so he went away again."

Mrs. Carman was, in her way, a much more important person than her daughter. She was short and stout; her face had never been pretty, and, as she grew older, the heaviness of her line of jaw, so usual in American faces, had been accentuated. Her hair, still brown, was parted, and her whole expression was one of extreme motherliness tempered by shrewd common sense. Nevertheless, her attitude to Marie Louise had never appeared to be conspicuously motherly since the period of childish diseases had been outgrown. In *Stonehurst* she was accused of neglecting the girl, or, at least, of leaving her culpably independent—an independence that had naturally increased since Marie Louise's accession to fortune. She had been known to smile, or even to flutter an eyelid, over some of her daughter's eccentricities, as if she herself had had nothing to do with bringing up so undisciplined a member of society.

Yet one could not say that Mrs. Carman was merely dragged against her will at the wheels of Marie Louise's chariot. On the contrary, the elder women enjoyed seeing the world more than the younger. Before her marriage she had gone once to Europe with her father, the cashier, and, though she had seen nothing off the beaten track, she remembered it all with an accuracy that more extended travelers might envy, and she still corresponded with some of the acquaintances she had made. She had, in a way, a faculty for making friends. The summer before, while Marie Louise had been driving,

sullen and ignored, about Newport, Mrs. Carman might often have been seen stepping out with her knitting-bag to take supper with friends in the town. She had entered into conversation with them coming over in the boat from the mainland, and the acquaintance had ripened.

But though she left her daughter free to manage her life her own way, she was never led into the mistake of regarding herself as a pensioner. The reason was simple. She had been perfectly content with her life at Stonehurst. If any favors had been conferred, it was she who had conferred them in being willing to move.

She never altered her mode of dress for hour, season, occasion, or bank-account. She wore a long skirt (which in wet weather she pinned up with safety-pins), and above it a garment which would have resembled a dressing-sack, had it not been made, like the skirt, of heavy black silk. Across her shoulders she sometimes threw a lace scarf—she had, indeed, a wonderful knowledge and appreciation of lace. She wore three rings, a black enamel band, in which was set a diamond that looked like a pebble, an amethyst with her initials in diamonds on it, and a ring of her mother's hair. No persuasion of Marie Louise's could induce her to replace them with anything more modern.

Now she folded her hands upon the curves of her person and observed her daughter, who in the most elaborate of frilled lace petticoats was in the act of placing an amber-colored comb in her amber-colored hair with the precision of an artist.

"*'Philanthropist,'*" she murmured reflectively.

Marie Louise was not at all disturbed by her mother's ridicule. She took up her hand-glass and studied the effect of the back of her yellow head before she answered. In her earlier days a silver set for her dressing-table had been the one thing of all others which she desired, and in the first flush of her fortune she had bought one. But her taste had quickly progressed beyond

it, and she had replaced it by ivory and gold, while the silver set was relegated to the "guest-room," where, for obvious reasons, it was never seen.

Satisfied with the result, she laid down the mirror, and said with the utmost good temper:

"Now, mommer, you let me alone. I am enjoying myself my own way, and not doing any harm, am I?"

No, Mrs. Carman expressed her belief that in housing sick babies her daughter was wiser than in many other expenditures, and her eye rested on the creation in brilliant blue which the maid was shaking off before slipping it over the head of Marie Louise.

To tell the truth, Mrs. Carman thought her daughter's clothes terrible beyond expression, but she never commented on them, and when presently, in all her blue finery, with a nodding hat to match, Marie Louise drove away in her little victoria, Mrs. Carman watched her out of sight with a smile of the most dispassionate amusement.

Marie Louise was not twenty minutes late by design, but quite simply, because she had taken longer to dress than she had expected. Her estimate of half an hour was founded on old Stonehurst days, when the change of a sash or the mending of a tear was the utmost complication that could arise. Now veils and slippers and petticoats to match different costumes and different coiffures for different hats left her always behind time.

By a quarter before two the other guests of Miss Bowles had begun to be very impatient.

"Who are we waiting for, Serena?" asked Mrs. Emmons. "Not the little Italian, I hope. He was an hour late somewhere the other evening. Really, people like that ought to be insured—underwritten, guaranteed as to their punctuality, before any one accepts an invitation to meet them. I hate to wait for meals. Why wouldn't that be a good profession for you, Jerry—to assure desirable guests arriving on time?"

"I sometimes wish I had a profession," said Orvice. "It lets you out of so many tiresome things—to be busy."

"You have a profession," said Mrs. Emmons; "one of the best, only it's like discovering the north pole; you can only do it once."

"Some day you must tell me what it is," said Jerry, turning over the newspapers which were lying on a table near him.

"I'll tell you now," said Miss Bowles. "It's marrying an heiress."

A slight change of expression, which in any one else would have been annoyance, crossed Orvice's face, but he said, without looking up: "Oh, do you call that a profession, or merely a necessity?"

"Well, if it's a necessity," returned his hostess, "you ought to be all the more grateful to me. Make the best of your chances. We are waiting for Miss Carman."

"Now what do I know about her?" cried Mrs. Emmons. "What is it I know, Bill?"

"Nothing that I know," answered Mr. Emmons sadly.

"How true that is," said his wife. "But hasn't she been getting divorced, or going on the stage, or something? Why do I seem to have heard the name?"

For answer Orvice unfolded the *Watch-Dog* and held it before Mrs. Emmons' eyes.

"A very pretty woman," he observed critically.

And it was on this tableau that Marie Louise entered.

"I am so sorry I'm late," she began. "Is that clock right—ten minutes to two?"

"And I haven't had any breakfast," said Orvice.

Miss Bowles introduced them, and, Marie Louise's eyes falling on the paper, she went on hastily:

"Oh, you have that dreadful thing. What do you do with these reporters? What do you do, Mrs. Emmons?"

Mrs. Emmons' manner had undergone a very slight change, that often follows the entrance of another woman, for Miss Bowles hardly counted.

"I'm sure I don't know," she said, "what I should do, but I am sure I

should be enormously flattered if any paper wanted my picture, but they never ask me, do they, Bill?"

"They must ask the photographers," said Bill gravely.

"Oh," said Orvice, "*your* picture is part of the office furniture, Mrs. Bill, like the red ink and the office cat."

"How disagreeable you are, Jerry," answered Mrs. Emmons, not at all disturbed. "You know I hate to have my picture in the paper."

"You must have a horrid life," said Orvice.

Jerome Orvice was a person about whom there was a great deal of difference of opinion. By some men he was frankly disliked, on the ground of his being "fresh," and by a smaller number of women, who implied that they had had experiences! Certainly their repetition of his utterances was inexcusable. Yet he went wherever it struck him as amusing to go, belonged to more clubs than he could use, and had a general air of having much to give and little to receive that explained the irritation of those who disliked him. His friends asserted that the only reason why he was unpopular with any one was his excessive candor, which the gravity of his habitual expression bore out; for freshness is connected with exhilaration and a certain misplaced gaiety; while with Jerry a smile was rare.

He had gone through college idly but not ill, and now at twenty-four seemed perfectly content to live in his mother's house in the enjoyment of a very small income left to him by an adoring great-aunt. This, as his detractors pointed out, was not the conduct of a particularly valuable person; and the fact that his mother loved him of course proved nothing at all. Yet, though not at all popular, he had a gift for the most unlikely friendships, ranging from college dons to Japanese generals. Every summer while he was at college he had gone abroad. Once he spent two months with an Englishman in a remote part of Burma. Not even his own family discovered for years that the gentleman was one of the great lights

of the civil service. Mrs. Orvice had become quite inured to Jerry's cool, "Oh, mother, there's a fellow here who was awfully civil to me in—" Egypt or Cuba as the case might be. "Would it be an awful bore to ask him to dine?" These occasions gradually lost their terror for her in the certainty that she would hear from these stray strangers a flattering estimate of her son, or perhaps only see their faces light up when he entered. Sometimes, of course, their parties included wives, daughters, or sisters, who invariably called Jerry by his first name, and could give no pleasure to his mother, inasmuch as they belonged to the sex whose admiration is not a compliment but a menace. Of late, however, Mrs. Orvice had come to the encouraging conclusion that Jerry was fickle—telling it to herself as if it were the crown of virtues—as indeed perhaps it is, in a son. Yet women should beware of flattering themselves with this belief, merely because their sons fail to live up to the passions invented for them. It was more Mrs. Orvice's judgment than Jerry's constancy that was at fault; and she often accused him of having got over passions that had existed only in her own timorous imagination.

As they sat down at the lunch-table (the party consisted of only the Emmonses, Peale, Jerry, and Miss Carman), Mrs. Emmons turned to Marie Louise.

"I hear you have taken the Washburn house," she said. "I think you are so sensible."

"Sensible!" echoed the girl. The adjective surprised her. She would have understood "extravagant," "fortunate," but "sensible!" Mrs. Emmons, taking her astonishment for disagreement, went on glibly:

"Oh, yes, you are sensible. You must acknowledge that the servants' arrangements are perfect, which is ever so much more important than the decorations, and you don't have to live in your own hall."

Now the entrance-hall had been Marie Louise's special admiration. It was faced in black marble shot with

green, with two unnecessary columns and a marble table to match. She had thought it very dignified and magnificent, and, having thrown some white bearskin rugs and a tiger or two on the marble floor, she had been thoroughly satisfied with the result. She now looked, as she felt, puzzled.

"You don't like it?" she asked, so seriously that no one doubted she was in fun.

"I'm not brave enough to like it," said Jerry. "It frightens me so. I am always expecting to meet Nero behind one of the columns, and to be thrown to the lions or something."

"Well, with all its faults, it's a good house for entertaining," said Mrs. Emmons; "and I hope you are going to give a ball."

"But I don't know any one to ask," said the girl.

The next instant she could have bitten out her tongue. She had spoken on the impulse of the minute, through her natural love of being a little dramatic, a little startling. There had seemed to be something piquant in telling these people plainly that she was not of them. But of course it was only piquant if they were saying to themselves: "What, this pretty, well-dressed, brilliant young creature knows no one!" If, on the other hand, they felt merely that she was an insignificant enough little outsider the point was entirely lost.

The moment was something of a turning-point. Miss Bowles had asked the girl to luncheon through a variety of reasons, partly through kindness of heart and partly through obstinacy. Having become more or less her champion before she had seen her, she found that the attitude persisted. The little party had been carefully chosen. The Emmonses, if by good luck they took a fancy to her, could be the greatest help; Peale, because he liked so few people that his indifference could do no harm, while his liking a great deal of good; and Jerry Orvice, because the attentions of that sort of young man made a girl more enviable than anything else, in Miss Bowles' opinion, to

say nothing of the prospect of so advantageous a marriage for Jerry.

Miss Bowles had felt very confident of success when Marie Louise entered in the blue and gold finery of her dress and hair. But the girl's last sentence turned her cold. Of course, Miss Bowles said to herself, it is perfectly evident that she knows no one, but why make every one feel awkward by saying so?

To the two men, however, it appeared to appeal differently. Prixley Peale, who had not been much impressed before, began to be at last a little amused. He had seen so much of the more complicated forms of social maneuvering, that Marie Louise's candid operations had something of the same interest that an old criminal judge might feel in coming unexpectedly on a pickpocket at work. It was all as frank and open as a child's eyes in a toy-shop.

Orvice, on the other hand, did not see it as exactly amusing. He found it pathetic, and felt inclined to blame society, or, rather, Miss Bowles and Mrs. Emmons as its representatives. Why did not some one tell her how little any one was worth knowing, how little the whole game was worth playing, even when you won? But, at the same time, he found himself eager that she should have what she wanted, and, to further this end, he and Prixley were presently urging her to let them give her a joint party—to take any form she chose, to include any one she wanted.

One did not have to be very long in the room with Jerry and Mrs. Emmons to be aware that she always followed his lead, and she was soon drawn into the discussion of who should be asked, while, naturally, Miss Bowles was not to be kept out.

Marie Louise listened with the intense interest of the willing scholar. She was dumfounded to hear the lightness with which the names, which she had supposed from reading the papers were of the utmost importance, were here dismissed or not even mentioned. One was a good old soul, but gave such dreary parties; and this of parties to which Marie Louise had looked as the

very apex of her ambition. Another might "do very well if you were having a hundred, but not for anything really small." The girl began to see how infinitely more complicated it all was than it seemed from the outside. She felt vaguely alarmed. If it did not count for anything to be well known and rich, and a giver of large entertainments, how could it count for very much to be just rich and nothing else?

"Well, of course, the truth of the whole matter is," Mrs. Emmons was saying, "that it doesn't make near so much difference to know the right people as not to know the wrong ones."

"But how in the world," Marie Louise burst out from the depths of a troubled spirit, "am I to tell who the right ones are? It seems so difficult. Can you tell me?" She suddenly turned to Peale. "Could you tell me, Mr. Peale?"

Now Peale, like a great many people who are aware of making social distinctions while so what despising them, was always irritated at hearing them talked about in public, and he answered:

"I can tell my friends, thank you, Miss Carman, and I am afraid I don't see the necessity of introducing any other standard."

Marie Louise fell back, feeling, she did not know why, dreadfully snubbed, but she was immediately relieved to hear Mrs. Emmons laugh rather mockingly, and take up the responsibility of answering.

"Isn't that just like Prixley? Of course he doesn't feel the necessity of other standards, because we have saved him the trouble. We have cultivated such a taste for the best, that we are the only people he can *feel* friendship for."

"I rather doubt that," said Peale.

"I wish I could," put in Jerry. "I often think I should like a return to nature—white muslin and a big waist—but after a short experience of you, Mrs. Bill, it isn't possible."

"The truth of it is," Mrs. Emmons went on, "Prixley is more of a snob than any of us. He won't go to peo-

ple's houses just because they give nice parties. He wants to know who they are. That is what he is always asking, isn't he, Serena? *Who are they?* As if it mattered *who* they are when *what* they are is all right."

"I own," said Peale, "that perhaps it was narrow to ask how people's grandfathers made their money, but now we seem to think it is provincial to ask how they are making it themselves. And I saw you the other evening, Mrs. Emmons, sitting between a man who is under indictment for bribery and——"

"Now, please, PRIXLEY," interrupted Miss Bowles, "don't begin to talk like that. I don't think anything is more second-rate than to introduce moral ideas into social relations. I have some cousins in Yonkers who are always asking me about 'the immorality of society.' They intimate it is the reason why they don't mingle with it. (I need not tell you the real reason, poor old ladies.) I judge people just the way I find them. I judge them the way they used to judge the witches. If they swim they are all right, if they sink they're not—or perhaps it was just the other way. Anyhow, I am always willing to give a helping hand as long as they can keep their heads above water, and if my virtue needs a victim, I expend it in pushing down those who have already gone under. I call that charity and common sense."

"Then I must be afloat," cried Marie Louise, "for you are certainly giving me a helping hand."

"Oh, you're all right," said Miss Bowles. "The great thing in New York is to have something to bring—oh, not only material things, though they are well enough, but beauty and brains, like your mother, Jerry; or nice, smart looks, like yours, May."

"No brains for you, Mrs. Bill," Jerry observed.

"Well, May does not pretend to be clever, do you, May?" Miss Bowles went on, quite unabashed. "Neither do I, and yet—— Has it ever occurred to you to ask why it is I am asked everywhere—unmarried, over forty, and not well off?"

"I always supposed my well-known passion for you had something to do with it, dear Miss Serena," said Jerry.

Miss Bowles paid not the least attention to him, but went on:

"The reason is that I have something definite to bring. That is my idea of our duty to society. I never was handsome, and, as I said, I'm not clever, but I have something to contribute. I *know about people*. I make it my business. I come out as regularly as the daily papers, and no one can sue me for libel. I'm right. Some people gossip. I tell the truth."

"How infinitely wicked," Orvice murmured.

Marie Louise hung on every word, with an attention very different to that which she had paid so conscientiously to the speakers at the board meeting. She felt at last that her feet were set upon the right track. She, usually so talkative, hardly spoke, but sat silent with her eyes usually fixed upon Orvice.

Toward three she took her departure, following the example of the Emmons.

Miss Bowles detained Jerry.

"Isn't she pretty? Won't she be a success?" she asked.

"One doesn't want to be like PRIXLEY, of course, but one does want to ask who she is?"

Miss Bowles nodded triumphantly. "You see," she said, "you have to come to me for information. Well, there is a story that her mother was a car-cleaner on the New York Central, and found the favorite tooth-brush—— All a lie, my dear. They were decent people in a small, up-State town, and her father struck gold, or something, and left her—— Now, Jerry, you have first start. Do make the best of it before she is snapped up by some fortune-hunter."

"Some day when she is a duchess," said Jerry, "we shall laugh over the remembrance that you once offered her to me."

"But you do think her charming?"

"Charming? Not a bit. Rather appealing."

"Why shouldn't you marry her as well as any one else?"

"Well, I think of a good many reasons. In the first place, I have nothing to attract a girl like that. She wants a title; or will by the time you people have finished with her. Besides, I am going up the Amazon this winter with a couple of English fellows who own a rubber forest, and when I come back in eighteen months, Miss Carman will probably no longer be an American citizen."

"How irritating you are, Jerry! You might think of your mother."

"You think Miss Carman would be her selection for me?"

"I think she would be glad to see you settled."

"I see—at the only profession I'm capable of. Good-by, Miss Serena."

But Miss Serena could not help hoping she had made more impression on him than he would admit. If only she could give Marie Louise what she termed a "hint" also. Then she remembered the Amazon with annoyance.

IV.

Marie Louise had left Miss Bowles' house in a whirl of delight. Outside, it appeared that Mr. Emmons was going to his club, and Mrs. Emmons finally agreed that he should take the automobile, and she be driven home by Marie Louise. At parting, she gave vent to an indefinite but friendly phrase about seeing the girl again. Marie Louise refrained with a struggle from being too grateful.

Yet the impulse was not due entirely to Mrs. Emmons' civility, satisfactory as this was. So unusual a feeling of elation had taken possession of her. No wonder, she thought, that men and women like this are sought after. The instant after she was thinking that but for the accident of her father's will she might never have known that men like Orvice were to be met with on this mundane planet. Who knows but what, after four or five years more of Stonehurst, she might have been per-

fectly content with Bobby Peters? She shuddered.

She was amused, and not at all alarmed, to find as she drove home how distinctly she could remember even the tone of everything Orvice had said, the way he had sat nursing one ankle, the little gesture with which he had once pushed up his tie. It only showed, she reflected, how vivid a personality he must have. And perhaps, indeed, it showed nothing more. She attempted to recall Peale, but he seemed quite faint and colorless now, although at the board meeting she had found him a very distinguished person. She fell to considering the effect she had made. Had it been a mistake to confess that she knew no one? The women had both looked shocked, but wasn't honesty the best policy? Certainly, Mr. Orvice had not entirely hated her, or he would not have offered her the party—he and Mr. Peale.

And then her joy was dashed by the realization that this party which might have furnished so good an excuse for future meetings had not been put to any such use. "Why," she said to herself, in the Stonehurst formula, "he never even asked if he might call!" It was the first step in her past experience of men who took even the mildest interest. Plainly, the party was never going to come off. Very likely she would never see him again.

As a matter of fact, it was Peale who wrote to her a few days later and gave her the choice of several dates. The party was to take the form of a dinner at a restaurant, and a very late and somewhat noisy arrival at a theater afterward. A moderate enough number had been the original plan, but this had gradually increased.

Needless to say, its mere existence gave rise to rumors of Orvice's engagement; rumors which at once reached Jerry, and annoyed him not a little. Why, he asked, was PRIXLEY supposed to be above suspicion?

Perhaps the presence of Mrs. Orvice gave color to the reports, or might have, had any one noticed the critical and troubled expression with which her

eyes now and again rested on Marie Louise. For she, too, was wondering what was the occasion of this rare energy on her son's part. In what relation was she to stand to this yellow-haired, bespangled, bejeweled young woman, who gave her photograph to newspapers and offered hospitals as if they were toys?

Miss Carman had not been put next to Jerry at dinner. She was sitting between Peale and a young Italian prince—a slim young man of that finished and gentle manner which can give to the smallest of small talk a certain distinction and interest. Even Marie Louise was conscious of crudity, and found herself talking with lowered voice and less positive assertions.

The prince was supposed to have come out in order to study steel construction in connection with property his family owned in Rome; but there were, of course, other stories as to his motives in coming, to which his obvious interest in his neighbor now gave color.

They had not finished soup before Marie Louise was revolving the proper mode of address to an Italian princess at home. A vision rose before her eyes of herself in velvet and point-lace, trailing through marble halls. Some American girls, she reflected, would not know how to live up to an opportunity like that.

She fell before long to questioning him about the court, feeling, for she had her fair share of prudence, that this was as good a way as another of determining his standing. She was distinctly chilled to hear him reply firmly that he did not go to court.

Her belief in him was so shaken that she was now perfectly ready to turn to PRIXLEY, who hitherto had had only the spangled butterfly on her shoulder presented to his gaze, and at once confided her disappointment to him.

He was able to make clear something of the distinction between "blacks" and "whites" in Rome. She listened with her steady, childlike look, and then pronounced her opinion that "the papal court would be every bit as amusing." PRIXLEY noted with amusement that she

turned back to the prince with her old interest. He felt tempted to touch her elbow and whisper that ladies were never expected to wear low-neck when cardinals were to be present. He saw so plainly the vision before her eyes that he knew the information would be pertinent.

As a matter of fact, the poor prince was infinitely the more in need of the two of explanations. He had been so far encouraged before the end of the evening as to venture to express a hope that he might some day have the pleasure of being introduced to Mrs. Carman.

Marie Louise thought she had never heard an instance of greater good nature. She hardly expected mere Americans to take an interest in "mommer," but a prince! She beamed upon him in her appreciation.

"Well," she said, "I'm at home on Mondays, and mommer often comes down."

He was relieved to hear from Orvice, whom he consulted at the first opportunity, that the mother was neither invalid nor imbecile.

The next Monday he presented himself, and had, by a rare accident, the good fortune to see Mrs. Carman. Marie Louise, who was not of the sort to be ashamed of her mother, wished, nevertheless, that the day had been fairer, for Mrs. Carman, who had been out walking, wore a bonnet constructed the year before by a Stonehurst milliner. She did not naturally suppose that the prince's own mother was even less modern in head-gear.

The little prince felt that the meeting had gone very well. Mrs. Carman was rendered somewhat shy by his title, and could not bring herself to address him as anything but "sir," but this did very well, and they contrived to chat very nicely.

A few days afterward he came again, and could not guess that he had seriously injured his cause by bringing a bouquet.

It only shows how dangerous it is to embark on matrimonial projects in alien lands. The prince had been de-

lighted by his encouraging reception, and never imagined that he was merely being treated as a "beau"; that his position differed in no way from that of Bobby Peters when he used to come every Sunday evening at Stonehurst. On the other hand, Marie Louise did not suppose that any one could be so ignorant as to think that a girl committed herself by tolerating attentions that were clearly the due of youth and beauty. She would have thought it most unmaidenly to make up her mind to accept the prince before he had asked her.

Jerry came in—his first visit—after the prince had left on the very day on which he had brought the fatal bouquet. She pointed with a gesture of contempt to the regular circles of roses.

"Do you think he can be a real prince?" she asked.

Jerry replied that in his own country it would probably have been surrounded by a paper frill.

The girl marveled. "Why, even Bobby Peters," she said, "knew better than that, when he used to bring me pinks, done up in brown paper, to wear to church. He knew he ought to have sent them from a regular florist with his card."

"Poor Bobby Peters," said Orvice, selecting his piece of toast carefully, but his tone was so poignantly sympathetic that Marie Louise asked in surprise:

"Why, did you ever know him?"

"Never," answered Orvice; "but your manner tells everything. He has, of course, loved you for years, and he was just beginning to hope that about the year after next he would be justified in asking you to be engaged to him, when all of a sudden you became an heiress, and he never dared ask you at all."

"I don't know why that should have stopped him if he really cared; do you?"

"Why, yes, if he really cared, I think I do know."

Marie Louise looked at him grave-

ly. "Would it have stopped you?" she asked.

"Yes," said Jerry, and took away all meaning from his answer by adding: "In Bobby Peters' place."

"Well," said Marie Louise, "he never did ask me." And then went on with characteristic directness: "No one ever did."

"By Jove!" said Orvice. He leaned back in his chair and studied her coolly. "This time next year you won't be able to say that."

"I hope not, I'm sure," said the girl warmly. "Bobby did hint once that if I did not marry him he would move away and go into business in Troy, but I suppose that could hardly be counted, could it?"

Jerry laughed. "I think we can do a little better for you than that in the metropolis," he said. "In fact," he went on, glancing at the prince's bouquet, "I should say the experience was approaching rapidly."

"Oh, you mean the prince." Marie Louise looked thoughtful. "I was awfully excited at first by the idea of being a princess, but," she shook her head, "now I think it would be almost grander to have refused a prince than to be a princess."

Orvice gave vent to no outward expression of hilarity.

"Possibly," he returned; "but if you do happen to have a fancy to be a princess, you could hardly find a nicer little fellow than this man."

The answer displeased Marie Louise—displeased her out of all proportion.

"Oh, I see," she said coldly, "you think I ought to jump at the chance."

"Far from it. I don't think any one ought to do any single thing they don't want to, and if I were situated as you are, I don't think I should marry at all."

"And I probably sha'n't," said she, glad of the opportunity to make the assertion, but she added directly: "Or if I do, it will certainly be some one I love."

"Well, I don't know that I agree with you there," he answered. "When you get over that, you know it is better to

find that you have a title and a position left than just nothing but—well, shall we say, but a Bobby Peters?"

"And does every one get over it?"

He smiled. "The statistics show that the mortality from the tender passion is low."

There was a moment's silence, and then the door opened and Mrs. Carman entered.

Jerry had not been specially eager for this meeting. The pictures he had drawn of what Marie Louise's "mommer" must be had not been attractive. Youth and beauty excused so much that would have been hard to bear otherwise. But now he found himself shaking hands with the utmost friendliness with this calm, good-natured looking woman.

"How do you do, Mr. Orvice?" she was saying. "I have heard Marie Louise talk of you. I like to know her friends."

"He's advising me to marry the prince," said Marie Louise sullenly.

"Begging your pardon," said Jerry, startled at the suddenness of the attack; "I'm doing nothing of the kind."

"Has he asked her?" inquired Mrs. Carman, with temperate interest.

"I believe not as yet," Orvice answered, finding he was expected to reply.

"I don't believe Marie Louise thinks she was cut out to be a princess," said her mother.

"I don't know why not," said Marie Louise. "I think I would make a very good princess."

Mrs. Carman merely chuckled at this, and, turning to Orvice, remarked: "And so you think it would be a good thing?"

"I think nothing of the kind," said Jerry quickly, "but I must confess your entrance saved me from another impertinence. I was going to advise your daughter that if she does not mean to take the little man, she had better let him alone."

"That's a pretty good rule with everything," said Mrs. Carman.

Jerry found himself turning with relief to Mrs. Carman's extremely intelli-

gent interest in what he had to say. "Over here, I know women are supposed to have no intentions," he went on, "but there, you know, a woman is called hard names if she leads a man on for the pleasure of saying no. They are so benighted as to think it dishonorable."

"Well, I'm sure I don't know how to refuse a man before he has asked me," said Marie Louise.

"Perhaps your mother could convey the notion to him," Jerry suggested.

Mrs. Carman looked alarmed. "Why, I hardly know the young man," she objected.

The matter ended—Jerry never could remember exactly how—in his agreeing to give the prince a hint himself.

Before he rose to go, Mrs. Carman had gone up-stairs and left them alone. Marie Louise had been staring before her, and did not at once notice his outstretched hand.

"I'm afraid," she said, at length, "that I am a very ignorant girl. I don't even know the rules of polite society in my own country, and certainly not in others. I wish you would always tell me things—like this, I mean." She gave her hand to him as she spoke, and his fingers closed upon it.

"By all means," he answered; "tell me all your love-affairs, and I'll advise you."

"I have no love-affairs—at least, I never did while I was poor."

"I wish you were poor at this moment," said Jerry, and then very sensibly took his departure, for pity, if not akin to love, has some unfortunately similar manifestations.

Her richness, her ignorance, the extremely bad taste of all her surroundings, touched, for some reason, his very tender heart, and he was so absorbed in thought that when a young footman sprang out from behind a column and handed him his hat he started violently.

That same evening Marie Louise received her first box of flowers from a "real florist"—a huge flowered box, full of warm, perfumed tissue-paper, and gardenias and lilies-of-the-valley. The card was Orvice's. The girl was still

sufficiently objective to be as much pleased with the flowers themselves as with the fact that Jerry had taken the trouble to send them to her. She enjoyed the enforced calm of her reception of them, as if it were an hourly occurrence, to match the perfect calm of the butler, to whom, indeed, it was.

Her whole life now had this delightful element of unreality, as if she were playing an exciting and complicated game. Other women might dress for balls; Marie Louise "dressed up," as frankly as a little girl on a rainy day. It happened that she had ordered and paid for the clothes she wore, but she had a feeling that really they belonged to some one else. She was never laced into an evening dress, with the lovely string of pearls she had bought herself about her neck, without feeling as much made up for the part as if she were about to step upon the stage; as if she were wearing a cotton-velvet cloak trimmed with rabbits' skin and a tinsel crown. It is the same feeling which every girl has, to a greater or less extent, the first time she puts on a long dress. With Marie Louise, it ran through every action; to give an order to the footman and drop back into the corner of the victoria, to touch the bell and let fall the words, "Tea, Simmons," to feel the carpet flung out under her feet before she entered her carriage—all caused her an almost excruciating delight. Even to drive about of an afternoon emptying little boxes of cards, while she checked off names on a crumpled penciled list—the wearisome round that even the most conscientious will shirk—was a joy to Marie Louise. How enchanting to know that there were people for whom she could leave cards! And when, as the winter wore on, and she had learned to say: "Visit, oh, dear no. If I get through my dinner visits I think I am doing well," it was merely the form of the pleasure that was changed.

Those brought up as members of a society can hardly take in the excitement that people, as such, were to the girl. The born "mondaine" requires some special inducement—an advanced

love-affair—to give her the thrill that Marie Louise derived from just going about

Not, of course, but what she had some dark and bitter moments. Her career was by no means an uninterrupted triumph, though regarded by old observers as wonderfully successful. Still, there were times when her conspicuous appearance only marked the fact that she was conspicuously neglected—particularly by other women. There were times when very disagreeable speeches were repeated to her. Again, there were parties to which she was not asked at all, even after, with some maneuvering, she had been introduced to their givers. No lovers ever watched the mails with greater longing than she for those large, square, fairly directed envelopes, which only too frequently failed to arrive. Part of the sting of these episodes was their secrecy. She could not explain even to her mother, who was incapable of understanding what Marie Louise referred to vaguely as "differences," and who regarded rather the number of times that the girl dined out than the houses she went to. Sometimes, particularly at first, when disappointments had been more frequent, Marie Louise had had serious thoughts of throwing up the game and returning to Stonehurst, which, with her present experience, she felt tolerably sure of being able to dazzle. Again, after a good run of luck, like a gambler, she felt convinced that no destiny had ever been as brilliant and certain as her own. This is at once the danger and the excitement of objective standards. She was forever judging herself, as an uncertain friend judges, by the event of the moment.

Nor were her interests only frivolous. Her offer to the hospital had been at last formally accepted, and she took the keenest interest in the plans for the new building. By this interest and energy, and by really bringing her powers to bear on the subject, she succeeded in making herself a valuable member of the board. Often in these days, girls who were driving in the park with

Marie Louise, or merely being transported from point to point (for the girl's possessions and conveyances were very useful to some of her new friends), would hear her say to them: "Do you mind waiting for a moment? I wish to speak to my architect." And she would disappear up the stairs of an up-town office building, and proceeding, unabashed, into the drafting-room, would distract the eyes of numberless young draftsmen by her healthy, handsome presence.

The architect himself, beside being a very good architect, was a very charming man, and could hardly be expected, considering the number of his friends, to refrain from repeating some of her criticisms. He could hardly enter a familiar drawing-room now without being greeted as, "Ah, my architect!"

Yet, though he laughed at her a little behind her back, he could not help feeling as others had found, that, even while he laughed, his heart warmed to her.

Of Orvice she saw a good deal. He came often to the house, condoling with her when she was depressed, laughing at her agony over malicious criticisms of her, advising her now and again, but, for the most part, chatting contentedly with Mrs. Carman, while Marie Louise, not so contentedly, perhaps, occupied herself with other visitors. Between the older woman and Jerry a tremendous friendship had grown up.

"I believe you like mommer better than me," Marie Louise had exclaimed one day.

She had grown to know that he would never respond to this species of coercion, and now he answered:

"Well, don't you think yourself she is nicer?"

His manner was always so perfectly friendly, that Marie Louise, rejecting the obvious explanation, began very soon to persuade herself that he had a reason for such self-control. It is a dangerous moment when it becomes necessary to read below the surface. She remembered his speech about Bob-

by Peters and her fortune, and when two or three other kind friends took care to warn her that Orvice was a notorious fortune-hunter, a very satisfactory explanation of his manner occurred to her. Of course, it might be that he cared nothing at all for her, but then why did he come so often? On the other hand, had he not himself said that if a man really loved a woman her fortune might serve only as an obstacle. Under certain hypotheses some boldness on the part of a woman is permissible. One does not want a man's best qualities to stand in his way. She found herself debating how, according to his supposition, the knowledge that the woman's affections were already engaged would act upon the man. Suppose, let us say, she had loved Bobby Peters; ought he still to have held back? She was deterred from putting the question by terror, lest Orvice should imagine that she had.

As the winter went on, and her social progress became smoother, another anxiety began to present itself. During the summer, while she was still unnoticed, Mr. Mullins had mentioned in one of his letters that another claimant to her father's fortune had appeared. "But give yourself no uneasiness," he had written; "this always happens when a rich man dies, and in this case the whole claim seems particularly clumsy." The story was that the man, whose name was Thomas, had put up the money for Carman's claim. Carman at the time was actually starving, and had consented to work the claim for the sake of the first year's profits. At the end of three years, Thomas, who was then just starting for Alaska, was to return and take over the mine. Unfortunately, Thomas had been delayed in Alaska; rumors had gone about that he was dead. Five years had elapsed since the agreement was made. The mine was his, Thomas said.

Mr. Mullins gave her the story, but pointed out that it hardly held water. In the autumn, however, he had written again that the whole thing could be settled and kept out of the courts, if she wanted, by sending Thomas five

thousand dollars. He was inclined to advise her to do it, on the condition that Thomas signed a paper releasing his claim. Marie Louise signed the check, and thought no more about it.

Now, however, the thing seemed to have cropped up again. Mr. Mullins' letters began to betray anxiety. Fresh evidence had been brought forward. He begged the girl not to alarm herself, but he was himself obviously alarmed. Another check, this time for eight thousand dollars, was sent to keep Thomas quiet.

She did not mention the situation to her mother. She had a strange pride about her fortune. No one should be troubled about it but herself. This, as much as anything, kept her from consulting Peale—a step she had considered. She was discouraged, too, by his manner. She felt that he was often amused at her, that he sometimes even a little despised her. Besides, she had a terror of admitting the possibility that the money could in any way pass from her, as some women will conceal their first gray hair. She would not be suspected of being an impostor, she said to herself, and she guarded her secret like death.

V.

At this time in New York one of the most conspicuous figures among a certain group of people was a lady—then unmarried. She was only twenty-seven, but, inasmuch as she had been grown up for at least ten years, she felt justified in assuming the privileges of a more advanced age. She was an orphan and lived alone; and, by a judicious alternation of asking advice and imposing her own opinion, she had contrived that all who criticized her were looked upon as Philistine.

Her looks contributed a good deal to this result, for, though counted very pretty by those who had a taste for early Italian profiles and round throats, the purity of her prettiness verged toward austerity.

She was very apt to speak of her age. "At my age," she would say, "a

single woman ought to be accorded all the freedom of a widow."

"I don't know," Orvice had once replied, "exactly how you resemble a widow, unless there was one, wasn't there, who feared not God, neither regarded men?"

Miss Lee pointed out to him his ignorance of the Scriptures, and went on to say that he was not only inaccurate in quotation, but inappropriate—she was distinctly of the order who fear God.

She might have gone on to prove that she also regarded man, and, she might have added, a good many men regarded her. She was credited by her friends, and even by her enemies, with a great number of love-affairs, over which she threw the magnifying mist of mystery.

Either from natural modesty or an established policy, Miss Lee always spoke as if her life were peculiarly devoid of romantic interest, and if she were ever confronted with the proofs of some one man's constant visits, she immediately averred that of all her friendships that was the most Platonic.

"Ah," she had been known to say, "it is the mothers who are my friends. If only the sons had been half as appreciative, I should not be an old maid at this minute;" an utterance full of falsity, except for the first sentence. The mothers were her friends.

Among them was Mrs. Orvice. She was a girl after Mrs. Orvice's heart, well-bred, intelligent, and most unlikely, as far as one can judge of these things, to be married by Jerry.

To her drawing-room Mrs. Orvice repaired in great distress of mind one afternoon not very long after the joint party to Marie Louise. Her confidence in Miss Lee was not misplaced, although she might not have extended it so freely if she had known the complete history of the friendship between her son and Miss Lee. Jerry was two years her junior, and, since before he went to college, he had looked on her with an admiration which, though it contained a fair measure of sentiment, was not love. Nevertheless, like most

of the permanent friendships between men and women, this one had had its moment of passion. Some years before, while Jerry, in an unusually expansive mood, was lamenting the unravaged state of his affections, a real emotion had swept down upon them both. A kiss, I believe, was not resented, and sentences of some warmth exchanged.

Both felt differently the next day. If anything can unite two individuals more than a common passion, it is a simultaneous recovery. The incident, which each had feared would be a difficult one to explain, they could now, through their mutual emancipation, look back upon as a pleasing instance of their humanity. It was, indeed, the most perfect basis for such a friendship as theirs. He found her the most congenial of companions, and the value of his compliments on her qualities of mind were enormously enhanced by her recollection of his past tributes to her less abstract qualities.

To this lady did Mrs. Orvice come, without the least concealment of her anxiety.

"My dear Barbara," she said, when they were alone, "I suppose I am very foolish, and Jerry would be furious if he knew I had discussed his affairs with any one, but, do you know, I begin to feel worried? You've heard all these stories about him——"

"You mean the story about the Alens' masked ball? Entirely May Emmons' own fault. Of course, if you allow a man——"

"I don't mean that," said Mrs. Orvice, with a short laugh; "for I haven't heard it, and I don't want to. The absurd adventures of my son's that I have already heard are quite enough. No, this is more serious than mere adventures. It seems to be a question of marriage."

Miss Lee's expression changed. Her look of gentle but omniscient reserve gave way to a certain strained attention. A man's marriage, as things are now arranged, threatens every other personal relation that he sustains, however innocent. Miss Lee would miss Jerry. Besides, it was almost a breach

of faith. It had always been understood that he liked her better than any other woman, and he had only been allowed to stay out of love with her, on condition that he seemed tolerably sure not to fall in love with any one else. And now things had got as far as this, and she did not even know whom Mrs. Orvice had reference to. Where had her eyes been? Beyond certain conspicuous, but meaningless, attentions to Mrs. Emmons she had noted nothing.

She asked the name of the lady—heard Marie Louise's, and expressed her relief.

"The exuberant young lady that he and Mr. Peale gave a party to? I don't think I should worry about her, dear Mrs. Orvice. Hardly a person to sweep Jerry off his feet."

But Mrs. Orvice's countenance did not brighten.

"I don't know about sweeping him off his feet," she answered, "but she is always sending him notes, and asking him to dine—you know how girls are about Jerry—and she is enormously rich."

"Oh, you mothers!" said Miss Lee, with affectionate condemnation. "You are more slanderous than a man's enemies. How can you suppose Jerry would do such a thing as marry her for her money?"

"I don't think it would be quite as bald as that. Suppose she shows that she cares a good deal, and—I certainly can imagine a man's limiting his horizon so that—well, so that a *poor* girl would not attract him."

Miss Lee shook her head. *She* had seen Jerry stirred. She felt she knew what she was talking about.

"Not that girl," she murmured, with a reflective smile.

"Then why does he go there so much? Why has he backed out of this Amazon trip, which he was so set upon?"

"He has backed out?"

"He's not going. He has given me no reason."

Miss Lee looked grave. "Well," she said, at last, "I will admit that the

idea may have occurred to him. He may even have made up his mind that some day he will ask her, but he never will. He has, at bottom, the simplest of ideals. His notions of what his wife and home should be are more than conventional—they are early Victorian. He will never ask a woman he does not love to marry him. On that I will stake my reputation for knowledge of human nature."

There was a pause, and then she added irrelevantly:

"She blacks her eyebrows."

"Really," said Mrs. Orvice, with pleasure. "I'll tell Jerry."

"I have already—at his dinner."

"And what did he say?"

"I don't remember. That it was a great thing to know just the thing you needed—or something like that. Has she any relations?"

"A mother—kept very much in the background."

Miss Lee smiled. "He once told me that of all his relations, he did hope to be able to point with pride to his mother-in-law. You see, he has a high standard in parents."

Mrs. Orvice took her departure much comforted, but, as often happens, she left some of her anxiety behind with her comforter.

After all, Miss Lee reflected, her belief in Jerry was based on an opinion formed when he was some years younger. He was good-looking and a gentleman, he had traveled and seen the world. When you had said this, you had said the best you could. He had had his romantic ideals at twenty-one, but who has not? Just because the people she knew spoiled him, and she herself was fond of him, there was no real reason for supposing that the idle life he led was not the full index to his character. Wasn't such a marriage the logical outcome of such a life?

If it were, the first step of a friend should be to change the life.

She saw this so clearly that perhaps she had something to do with a conversation that took place a few days

later over a tête-à-tête dinner at the club between Jerry and Peale. Miss Lee was seeing a good deal of Peale at this time, and was understood to have influence with him.

Peale had studied law in the office of Orvice, senior, and had been often at the house. Although little more than ten years older than Jerry, he had first known him when ten years is equal to a generation—that is to say, when Jerry was still at school and Peale had been out of college for several years. If he had met the younger man more recently, he would not have been particularly interested. His active life had no niche for idle, charming young men. But having known Jerry as a boy, he found plenty of reason for being attached to him.

As soon as it was evident that the critical moment of dinner had passed—the moment when it changed from a necessity to a luxury, from a meal to social occasion—Peale said simply:

"Do you want a job, Jerry? Old McManus told me yesterday that he wanted another secretary; one who, as he expressed it, would know his way about, who could speak French and German, and who had certain other qualities. It struck me you would be just his man."

"They tell you," said Jerry thoughtfully, "that everything is salable if you can find the right man, but I never supposed that any one existed who would have any use for my assortment of qualities. Upon my word, Prixley, this is very good of you."

"It doesn't sound like much, but you can never tell what things like that will lead to. A man's private secretary is often his only possible successor in a business way. He offers you a salary of twenty-five hundred dollars a year, and he has the temper of a fiend. Shall I tell him I have found the right man for him?"

Orvice was watching his own hand as it arranged and rearranged the forks beside his plate. He did not look up now, but merely shook his head.

"Just as much obliged to you, Prixley, but I'm afraid I'm not his man."

"This means you won't do for the job, or the job won't do for you?"

"Both, perhaps."

This time Jerry looked up and, smiling rather sheepishly, shook his head.

"Then," said Peale, "there is nothing more to be said. But I'm rather curious to know your reasons."

"I doubt if I have anything so creditable, but if you want the causes—why, I don't want to work. My dear fellow, don't look so puzzled—a perfectly ordinary phenomenon is before you."

"Perhaps it is," admitted Peale, with something of a struggle, "but it's one I have never had explained to me before. Do you mind giving me a little information about your state of mind?"

Jerry laughed. "I don't mind your having it," he said, "but I hate like poison having to become so conscious of my own weakness. I am, quite simply, idle, worthless, and slightly but comfortably in debt. Why the devil should I work? I am happy, and I don't have to?"

"The future doesn't trouble you?"

"Why should it? It is only people who work who trouble about the future. They may lose their jobs. I can't lose mine. You see, the thing that confuses you is that I am content. Most of the idle men you know are not, but, then, are the men who do work so perfectly satisfied?"

"Well," said Prixley, "I will admit that perhaps work as an end in itself cannot be defended, but you say yourself you are living beyond your income—that you are in debt."

"I said comfortably in debt, Prixley. Just enough to save me the struggle of trying to make both ends meet—that is almost an economy. It releases your spare cash."

"But it seems to me," answered Peale seriously, "that you get so little in return for your idleness, if I may so express it. An occasional trip, which I own I envy you, but for the rest, what does it mean? To smoke a little better cigars than you ought, to drink a little better wine than the next man—"

"To lead," interrupted Jerry, smiling, "a life, which, ignominious as you think it, satisfies me perfectly. There are only two things that make people discontented—natural ability and poor health. I have escaped both. I enjoy life because I live as I please. And when I see the poor, overstrained bread-winners who drop in late in the afternoon at the club too tired to enjoy anything, I cannot think them so much better off than I am."

"You judge such men very superficially," said Peale rather hotly. "It is the object for which they work that repays them."

"Oh, the ones who are working for a wife and child—perhaps one could contrive to envy them; but then, my dear Prixley, it would be the sheerest impertinence for me to work for a wife and child, because it would have to be some one else's."

"You mean it isn't possible that you yourself should ever want to marry?"

"That I should want to? Possibly. Quite out of the question that I ever should, for we have just been showing that I cannot even support myself."

If Peale had been a woman he would have made the obvious suggestion that even in Orvice's circumstances matrimony is possible if the woman be prudently selected, but, being a man, he said nothing, finding an intimation, frankly intended by the speaker, quite as honest as any direct assertion was likely to be.

Later, that same evening at the opera, he had an opportunity of communicating the results of this interview to the lady who had inspired it.

Miss Lee allowed herself the luxury of two seats in the orchestra one night a week. She never went in a box; she said she could neither talk nor listen. Her seat, however, was on an aisle, and not infrequently it was observed by those who sat near her that gentlemen, filched from the boxes, came strolling down to talk with her.

"Well," said Peale, bending over her chair, "he won't have anything to say to the proposal."

She looked sad. "Dear me," she

murmured, "I'm afraid he is not much good, after all."

"Oh, your sex's fatal desire to come to a conclusion! The longer you delay a conclusion, Miss Lee, the better it is. Anyhow, I elicited this much; it won't be that," and he nodded above them, where Marie Louise in bronze paillettes was drawing all eyes to her box.

"Oh, I could have told you that myself," returned Miss Lee, with more confidence than she felt. "He has too much taste and love of—"

"Of you," Peale put in.

"Of breeding, I was going to say. He does not love me."

"What, you sigh, madame?"

She looked up and smiled. "Did I sigh? Well, he is a very nice boy, Mr. Peale."

"The deuce take him!" said Peale. "He may go to the devil his own way, if you talk like that. But I can tell you that he might do worse than marry the young lady up there. If ever a warm heart and a simple nature—"

"What, you too! Is every one I am interested in going the same way?"

Peale laughed. "Oh," he said, "you would not trouble to send Orvice to rescue me."

"Perhaps I should come myself," answered Miss Lee.

VI.

And what would these good friends of Jerry's have thought, if they could have seen him the next day?

He was sauntering homeward, after a game of rackets at his club, when his eye fell on Marie Louise's carriage standing before the door of a celebrated jeweler's. The carriage was perfectly unmistakable even to one less interested than Orvice. It was a black brougham, as much and as brilliantly picked out in white as it could be, with white cushions. It needed, as Prixley had observed, only a pair of zebras in the pole and a pair of convicts on the box. Marie Louise, however, had contented herself with two enormous white horses, which showed blue-white be-

tween the bands of heavy black harness; her liveries were almost white, braided in black. She herself admired the result enormously, and never doubted that the numbers of her fellow creatures who turned to stare after her equipage were actuated by admiration and envy.

Seeing this remarkable vehicle, Orvice at once turned into the shop, and stood for some seconds at Miss Carman's elbow, before she raised her eyes from a tray of jewels spread out before her and saw him. Her manner was as cheerful as ever, but Orvice observed that she had been crying.

"Who do you think is engaged?" she began, at once, shoving all the jewels back at the salesman, as if they had been pebbles. "Bobby Peters!"

"What, not the only man who— Not really?"

She nodded. "He is going to marry one of my best friends, and I am going on to the wedding. I'm going to take a large party in a private car. Will you come?"

"I don't know that I ought to lend myself to any such scheme," said Orvice. "I believe you are just going in order to catch his eye at the altar and make him regret his choice. The best women are so revengeful."

"How can you think me so spiteful?" she returned. "Anyhow, I don't believe I could. He probably thinks her much nicer, and so she is. No, I'm just going for the fun of showing Stonehurst what I can do. Of course, I should like to make the president of the Institute, and all the Park Slope people, feel badly, if I could."

"And you think I shall contribute to that effect. How very flattering!"

"Oh, I know you will," she returned, now turning her back to the counter and resting her elbows on the edge of it, so that the salesman, discouraged, moved a little away. "They never saw anything in the least like you in Stonehurst. Will you come?"

Jerry looked at her gravely. "I will," he said, "if you will assure me that it is not for Bobby Peters that you have been shedding tears."

"For Bobby Peters?" she retorted, coloring slowly. "How absurd! Wait until you see him. Oh, no, but it is a lot of care and worry—having money."

"My tradespeople tell me the same thing about not having it."

She seemed eager to change the subject, and invited his attention to a wedding-present.

She wanted, she said, to give them something really handsome, but she was afraid that if she gave the bride jewels it would look as if she had left Bobby out on purpose. She did not want any one to think she was piqued. Of course, there was always silver, but that was so ordinary.

Ordinary, Orvice returned, trying to put his mind on the problem, and for people who kept few servants, hard to keep clean, or so his mother was always telling him.

Marie Louise doubted if the Peterses would keep any servants.

In view of this fact, Orvice could not feel that her final choice of a tall silver and gold cup, set with white and yellow topazes, was the most appropriate, but Marie Louise scorned his criticism.

"Oh, no, of course it won't be *useful*," she said; "and I don't mean it to be. I think it is horrid because people are poor that every one always gives them ugly things—well, useful things, then. It is just like getting school-books for a Christmas present. Now she'll have one pretty thing in the house, and, let me tell you, she'll get a good deal more pleasure out of it than if I had furnished the kitchen for her."

He declined her offer of a lift home, and went on his way chuckling internally. Marie Louise was always a new experience to him. He never saw her without experiencing a profound and affectionate amusement; a sort of tenderness and mirth that put him in excellent temper with the world.

He and his mother lunched very cheerfully together, until, toward the end of lunch, he remarked casually:

"Well, mother, I'm going on a triumph before long."

"I am very glad to hear you have

anything to feel triumphant about," Mrs. Orvice replied genially.

"Oh, I don't go in capacity of hero. I walk in the wheel-ruts. Miss Carman is shortly returning for a brief time to her native town, and I am going as a manacled savage—the proof of the prowess of her bow and spear."

"I can't imagine a better selection," said his mother grimly. Her heart was bitter at the news.

"I am so glad you think so. I am picked out to impress a college president. I rather doubted my fitness, but perhaps you can help me out. Did you ever hear of the Stonehurst Institute?"

"I do not think I have ever heard of any of Miss Carman's former friends." And she could not resist adding: "I did not suppose that any one had."

"Oh, these weren't her friends," said Jerry. "These were the tyrannical aristocracy of Stonehurst." Then, seeing that his mother was becoming really irritated, he added, with a chuckle: "I do wish you could know Mrs. Carman."

His mother's countenance relaxed. "Yes, I am told she is quite beyond anything."

"On the contrary, one of the most delightful of women. Capable of disapproving of her daughter without interfering, and convinced that she is a goose without telling her so—a reserve that all parents are not capable of, my dear mother."

Mrs. Orvice did not pretend to misunderstand this. "I don't think you a goose, Jerry."

"A knave is worse, mother."

She did not answer.

The fame of Marie Louise's triumph soon got about, and must have reached even Stonehurst, for the day before she started she received a telegram from the president of the Institute urging her and all her party to dine with him the evening before the wedding.

Marie Louise was almost beside herself with delight. Not any one of her successes in the metropolis had given her as much satisfaction.

"To think," she exclaimed, to Peale, who was sitting next her at a dinner,

"he is actually giving a dinner in my honor! And, in old times, if he had asked me to come in to supper I should have been so proud! But his wife did not like me to come too often to the Institute hops. She thought I wasn't a good influence, or so some one told me. Perhaps it wasn't true."

"Doubtless, you know," said Peale, "that the capitalist who dines with a college president is in a parlous state."

"Oh, do you think he will ask me for money? Oh, if he only would! I don't know whether it would be most fun to give it or to refuse. To refuse President Andrews!"

Prixley, looking at her, thought he knew her well enough to know that in the end, giving would strike her as the pleasantest joke on her old enemy, but he did not say so, and she went on to tell him of the plans for her party.

He himself could not go, and, indeed, it was not easy to abstract New Yorkers from New York in the middle of the winter, even to go on a triumph. In the end Marie Louise could get only Jerry, the Emmonses, and a young Englishman, who was staying with them and had expressed a wish to see the "provinces." This seemed an excellent opportunity of doing so.

So, one morning, these four started off with Mrs. Carman and her daughter in a private car. The girl was in the wildest spirits. The mere thought of her past at Stonehurst threw her present into the most brilliant relief, and the prospect of Jerry's company for two uninterrupted days was enough in itself to make her perfectly happy.

They arrived in time to dress hurriedly for the president's dinner. This function Mrs. Carman had declined attending from the first. She went out to supper with a maiden cousin. She said to Jerry that President Andrews had got on very well without her for fifty years, and she guessed he could make out a little longer.

Her demure, black-gowned presence might perhaps have broken the shock caused by the entrance of Marie Louise and her party into the Andrews' drawing-room.

The president's wife and most of the other ladies of Stonehurst were in high-neck dresses, though here and there a discreet collar-bone peeped over a chiffon frill. Now, Mrs. Emmons was thought, even in New York, to wear her dresses rather low. In contrast to Stonehurst, she now appeared, even to New York eyes, almost unclad; while Marie Louise, in a flame-colored velvet, which she had had made specially for this occasion, was in her own way almost as surprising.

The president, by the aid of a long professional experience, stepped forward to greet the party with more apparent composure than he inwardly felt.

"It is a great pleasure to see you here again, Miss Carman," he began; and then added, for the stunned aristocracy of Stonehurst was incapable of supporting him: "Do you find Stonehurst very much changed?"

"Well, I find it a good deal more friendly," returned Marie Louise, with an irrepressible smile, that quickly degenerated into a chuckle.

Feeling the retort had been good, she tried to catch Jerry's eye, but tried in vain. Jerry, with that instinctive love of ease and pleasantness and social peace, was already at work trying to counteract the turmoil occasioned by their entrance, and did not propose to recognize any such hostile move as Marie Louise's last speech.

He soon found out that the demure little woman next him, the wife of the Methodist clergyman, was the daughter of a missionary in India, and there was nothing feigned in the interest he showed in her conversation.

Dinner had not been going on for many minutes before it was evident to every one that the only complete failure was Mrs. Bill, hitherto so uniformly successful. Indeed, so accustomed was she to being thought pretty and charming, that she had grown to think that any effort on her part was unnecessary—almost undignified. She believed, though perhaps she did not know how firmly she believed it, that her presence was a sufficient compliment to any gathering, which must then stand

on its own merits as to whether or not it could be fortunate enough to amuse her. It was a great many years since Mrs. Bill had had to consider whether she were contributing anything to the general amusement.

But here it became clear at once that she was *not*. "Better than pretty," her friends were in the habit of describing her fresh, smart looks. But in Stonehurst freshness of appearance was not at all uncommon, and a smartness that cut its dresses so very low was not particularly admired. For the first time in her life, Mrs. Bill sat wondering if, after all, she were good-looking. The cold eye of the professor of botany, turned, as it was, very rarely upon her, seemed to say: "You are ugly, you are indecently dressed, your face does not express intelligence, but I shall do my duty; I shall address a remark to you."

And he did. He asked her if she had attended the lecture of an Antarctic explorer who had been recently in New York. Try as she would, Mrs. Bill could not conceal the fact that she had never heard of the explorer, and was very hazy about the Antarctic. The professor could think of nothing else, and so they sat staring blankly before them, in mutual terror and disgust.

Marie Louise was not at a loss for conversation. She was soon giving the president her first impressions of the New York social world. The president was politely interested, but it was not for this that he had arranged a banquet in her honor. He tried once or twice without success to mold the conversation to his own uses, but Marie Louise's fluency swept him away again and again.

At last, however, her attention was drawn to Jerry, and, seeing his unaffected interest in his little neighbor, her spirits at once began to wane. Not that she was jealous—oh, dear, no. But what was the compliment of being a friend to a person who liked every one—even little flat-headed women in high-neck dresses? She allowed a pause to fall between her and her host, and, in the interval, the president inquired whether she had as yet decided

upon the form of memorial she intended to erect to her father.

It is to be feared that the idea had never occurred to Marie Louise. Or perhaps she thought that her own social success was the most conspicuous memorial the old man could have. She showed herself open to suggestions, however, and was not surprised to hear that Mr. Andrews had thought of a new school of mines for the Institute—Carman Hall. Marie Louise tried to harden her heart, yet the words had a flattering sound in her ears.

After dinner, while the men were smoking, further hostilities were avoided by the simplest of devices. After a few minutes' apparent mingling, and a few remarks on both sides about old times and the changes in Stonehurst, Mrs. Bill and Marie Louise retired to one end of the president's large drawing-room, where, from the delighted giggles that they emitted, it is to be supposed that they entertained each other, and probably at the expense of their fellow guests. The fellow guests supposed so, at all events, and it is to be doubted if the conversation that ran about the larger group of ladies was any more friendly in spirit.

Finding that as soon as the men came in Jerry returned to the little lady from India, Marie Louise did not linger very long.

She thanked Mrs. Andrews for a delightful evening, and took her departure.

Mrs. Emmons expressed her feelings as soon as she was safely in the carriage.

"Well," she said, "I don't wonder you came to New York as soon as you had the price of the fare."

And perhaps Stonehurst expressed itself even more fully in the temperate, but appreciative, smile that ran round the assemblage, as soon as the door had closed behind the New Yorkers.

VII.

Not since she left Stonehurst had Marie Louise enjoyed a really satisfactory gossip with a female friend. Some

of the girls she had met in New York had been friendly, had even confided in her; but a certain sense of danger, of something unknown and hostile and critical in them, had kept Marie Louise from similar imprudence.

She spent the whole of the next morning with Dora, going over the modest trousseau, looking at presents, and hearing the story of the growth of Bobby Peters' newer passion. This story would have seemed a hard one to tell, for, of course, it was also the story of how he had freed himself from the toils of Marie Louise, but Dora's loyalty to her friend attributed the change entirely to Marie Louise's greatness. No man could go on loving a woman who had soared so far above him.

Marie Louise found all this interesting, but it was as nothing to her excitement when Dora asked the inevitable question as to the state of Marie Louise's own affections. For, somehow, while expressing the utmost coldness to the sex in general and as individuals, Marie Louise, wishing to give merit where it was due, soon found herself talking almost exclusively about Jerry.

Dora knew everything in an instant. It was all as clear as day to Dora. Of course, he loved Marie Louise. Naturally a man would hesitate, knowing his own unworthiness. Why, even Bobby had hesitated, for Dora had been his confidant at one time. This was the only explanation. That a man should hesitate was to be expected; that he should be received by her as a friend and not instantly adore her, was, in Dora's opinion, perfectly incredible.

"Oh, I think he likes me," Marie Louise observed, "but nothing more—I am sure of that. If he did, you know, Dora, I don't see why he doesn't say so."

"Or else go away from you entirely," said Dora sagely. "He'll probably try to do that first."

The wedding was to be in the evening. We may be sure that Marie Louise had already learned from Mrs. Emmons that this was not the fash-

ionable hour, although until recently she had never supposed that a wedding could take place at any other time.

A few of the great ones of Stonehurst, whom Miss Carman deigned to honor, came to lunch on the private car—a sumptuous feast, very much admired by the porter. Afterward Marie Louise had intended a tour of the country in automobiles, but a chance question from Jerry changed her plans.

"Where did you used to live?" he said. "I'd like to see the house."

And so it happened that the rest of the party were sent off without Jerry and their hostess, and these two presently found themselves standing in front of the little slate-colored cottage.

Its appearance had not been improved by a year of desertion.

The grass, which had grown long in tufts, showed here and there above the melting snow; the paint had faded on the scalloped shingles, and the shutters were shut and barred.

They passed at once into the little sitting-room, and, looking about, Jerry felt a perfect frenzy of pity for any one who had had to spend the first twenty years of life in such surroundings.

The paper was a dark mixture of brown and gold scrolls; the furniture, now pushed into the middle of the room, was stained a deep purple, in optimistic imitation of old mahogany. The tables had marble tops and brass legs; the prints on each side of the mantelpiece (there was no place for a fire in it) represented ladies of the early days of the century, eloping without their parents' consent.

"My poor, dear child," he said, "did you really call this place home for twenty years? Good heavens, the patience of women! I should have robbed the till and gone to the devil in six months."

"Oh, no, you wouldn't," returned Marie Louise, beaming on him in the intensity of her admiration. Somehow the strength of his sympathy for her seemed to necessitate his taking her hand; and she did not take it away. "No, you wouldn't; you would have

made it all over into something beautiful, and you would have made your fortune, even in Stonehurst."

"Well, I haven't been so successful at it, even in New York," he answered, smiling; "but perhaps I shall have more success up the Amazon."

Oh, prophetic Dora! "Up the Amazon! What do you mean?" asked Marie Louise, with an alarm she did not think of concealing.

"These chaps have been backing and filling for six months, but I think we are really off now."

Marie Louise turned to him with serious eyes, and said in a tone calculated to compel the truth: "Why are you going?"

Now, in the face of so much significance, it was almost impossible to answer: "Because I want to;" and Jerry, casting about for a suitable and agreeable answer, said finally:

"I think I had rather be out of the country while you are making that grand match that you are so evidently destined for. This will give you at least eighteen months to break my heart in."

"How about my heart?" said she.

"Oh, the great match won't break your heart, because—I am selfish enough to be glad—yours won't be sufficiently involved."

"And suppose I do; suppose I should do as you say, and marry while you are away—you would be glad?"

"Glad that I had one less friend to come back to? Hardly."

Marie Louise's steady gaze never faltered. "You mean that if I were married we shouldn't be friends any more?"

Jerry looked at her, smiled, and slowly shook his head.

The smile was both tender and regretful, but beyond this it might have been interpreted in any one of a dozen different ways, but Marie Louise, under the influence of Dora's prophetic spirit, interpreted in the way she most desired.

"Don't go," she said. "Why should you, if you don't want to, and I can't bear to have you? I can't bear to have

you go, Jerry. Why should money stand between us? What is my money for if not to make me happy?"

"You wonderful, generous woman," cried Orvice, pressing both the hands she gave him against his breast; "I'll tell you what your money is for—to make you happy on a good deal higher plane, with a good deal more important man than I, I'm afraid."

"But how could I ever be happy with any one else, if I love you?" asked Marie Louise.

For answer Jerry kissed her, and the next instant was hearing that she had guessed a long time before that he cared, that it was wicked to think of going away from her without telling her, that it was insulting of him to have thought she would marry some one else as soon as his back was turned, and that, in short, she was the happiest of women, and was utterly undeserving of him.

Marie Louise had never hesitated to share anything, and she was now only too eager to share her happiness. Her mother was at once informed of her engagement. Mrs. Carman was sitting in the glassed-in observation-car, knitting, when Marie Louise and Jerry returned. The elder lady was at once smothered in the sable boa that her daughter was wearing, while the girl explained:

"He did care for me all along, mommer, and we're engaged. Aren't you glad?"

She did not wait for an answer, but whirled away to where she heard Mrs. Emmons' voice.

Jerry and Mrs. Carman were thus left alone, and a silence followed which he, at least, soon found only too suggestive.

"Am I all wrong, Mrs. Carman," he said, at length, "in thinking that you used to like me?"

"Oh, no," replied the future mother-in-law, "I like you very much, Mr. Orvice. I have often said to Marie Louise that I liked you better than any gentleman that came to see her, but I ain't a great believer in matrimony; no, nor a great admirer of your sex.

My husband ran away from me, Mr. Orvice; and I don't know why to this day."

"Probably because you were much too good for him."

Mrs. Carman chuckled faintly. "And you think that wouldn't apply to you and Marie Louise?"

"A man who loves a woman probably appreciates her even more than her mother, Mrs. Carman."

"Yes, if he loves her."

They exchanged a quick, violent glance.

"Is that what you think?" he asked.

"I don't just know what to think. I made sure you'd never ask her to marry you."

"And you would have thought better of me if I had not?"

Mrs. Carman shook her head. "I don't know that, either."

"Well, I tell you what it is," said Jerry. "Suppose you agree to think well of me if I succeed in making her happy?"

"Oh, it isn't hard to make Marie Louise happy. She mostly does it for herself."

"What are you afraid of?" he asked.

She shook her head again. "I don't know exactly."

He could get nothing more satisfactory from her, and went away confirmed in his opinion that she was a wise woman. Under certain circumstances the wise can depress one a good deal, and Jerry, feeling rather dispirited, left Mrs. Carman only to fall into the clutches of Mrs. Emmons.

He had not had time to think of Mrs. Bill's attitude toward his engagement, but now he recognized at once that she was not pleased. They had only a second, and stood facing each other in the narrow hallway of the car.

"There," she said quickly, "don't apologize. I suppose no man would be proof against having nine millions and a bouncing young woman thrown at his head—certainly not you."

"I was not going to apologize," said Jerry; "and I'm afraid you would have difficulty in making any one believe that——"

"Oh, yes, of course, you had the utmost trouble in winning a reluctant consent. My dear boy, have I not eyes in my head? Well, I dare say you will be quite as happy."

"At this moment I should be happier if you did not take quite such a disgusting view of my conduct."

"I see that if I listen to you a moment longer you are going to protest that you love her—that she is the only woman for you. Upon my word, Jerry, I don't think I can quite stand that. Let me offer you a piece of advice. You have to be honest with some one, in order to get the right lies told. I should advise you to be honest with your old friends."

"What a beast I must have been," said Orvice slowly, "if this is the best my old friends can think of me."

"You're one of the people that one can *think* anything of; one *feels* just the same."

"Thank you," said Orvice; "but I don't think I care much about being that kind of person." And with some abruptness he turned on his heel and left her.

He was standing in the dining-car, which at that moment was utterly deserted, when Marie Louise whirled in upon him.

She slipped both hands through his arm.

"Oh, Jerry," she said, "isn't it wonderful? Isn't it exciting? Every one is so pleased. Mommer's delighted. She always liked you."

He drew her to him, and rested his cheek on her hair. From this position it was obviously impossible that she should see his face.

"Every one," she went on, "except Mrs. Emmons; and of course she would be a little envious, because you are so much nicer than Bill."

"I wonder if I am nicer than Bill," said Orvice; and indeed it was the very first time it had ever occurred to him that he was not. "You know, my dear," he added, "that I am a pretty poor lot. Don't you believe it?" he added, as she laughed gently. "Or don't you care?"

"I don't believe I understand you," she returned. "I know you don't just bristle with principles the way Bobby Peters used to. But I know when a man's a gentleman it's all right, and I like whatever you are."

His arm pressed her so suddenly and so closely to him that when he released her she had quite forgotten that it had been she who initiated the caress.

Their avowed intention was not to announce the engagement until Jerry had had time to tell his mother, but any one who had observed them at Dora's wedding night might have guessed the truth, even if the beaming happiness of Marie Louise's expression had not already revealed it. After not too obvious maneuvering on her part they stood side by side in one of the front pews, and listened to the irremediable words exchanged by Dora and her Bobby. Marie Louise's eyes kept turning from the bride and fastening themselves on her tall neighbor, until at last Jerry glanced down at her. They allowed themselves a short meeting of eyes—kind and a little amused on his part; exalted and serious on hers.

It is not surprising that Mrs. Orvice had heard rumors of all that had taken place even before Jerry, immediately after his return from Stonehurst, found himself alone with her.

The train got in about five, and Mrs. Orvice was in the drawing-room drinking her tea when Jerry entered. He knew at once by the piercing and agonized glance she directed at him that she feared the worst.

"Well, mother," he said mildly, "does it stick out?"

It was one of those times, so common between people who love each other, when a crisis seemed to be only an opportunity of inflicting pain rather than of showing consideration.

"I don't know what you mean," returned his mother. She did know what he meant only too well, but she had no intention of softening his task for him. "Did you have a pleasant journey?" she added, in a tone of polite interest.

"You are quite right, my dear mother," said Jerry, not even noticing her

question. "Miss Carman has promised to marry me."

After a short struggle, Mrs. Orvice answered with real warmth:

"I hope that you will be very, very happy, Jerry."

"Well, if I weren't——"

"Ah, well, it does not seem to me that material benefits are the passports to happiness."

"A very original point of view, I'm sure," returned her son, with some bitterness.

"I am sorry you think it necessary to speak like that," replied his mother, justly incensed at his tone. "But that is always the way with young people. You must do whatever you wish, and then you are angry at me for not approving of it."

Her son laughed and kissed her. "Do you really think it was because you did not approve that I was angry? Of course, the world at large is going to take me for a mercenary beast, but I had rather hoped that you might see something more in it."

Plainly this was a point of view that had never occurred to Mrs. Orvice, and she honestly tried to invigilate it.

"You mean you love her? How can I think so," she moaned, "when I know she isn't the kind of girl you could love?"

"Wait until you know a little more about her."

"You do love her?"

"Am I to protest and justify myself to you?"

She did not answer, and he knew she was unconvinced.

VIII.

Not a little discouraged at his experience in announcing his engagement by word of mouth, Jerry wrote the news to the rest of his friends, among whom were Peale and Miss Lee. Both answered with very cordial letters; Prixley's praised Marie Louise; Miss Lee dwelt more upon Jerry's own qualities. And Jerry liked Prixley's the best.

The world at large, as so often hap-

pens, was less surprised at the news than were the contracting parties themselves. The general opinion was that, while the engagement was fitting enough, Jerry might have done better.

Miss Bowles was perhaps the only person frankly and wholly delighted.

"I have no patience with you, Anne," she exclaimed to Mrs. Orvice, to whose house she had hurried as soon as the information reached her; "your saying 'yes, so nice,' in that martyred tone. I should think it *was* nice. A fine, handsome, generous young woman like that, with all that money. It will be the making of Jerry."

"I am partial enough to think he doesn't need any making," returned his mother.

"Well, I suppose you'll admit he needs supporting. And she loves him—she *adores* him."

"If that were the only requirement, I should have had several daughters-in-law already."

"And would you have preferred them? Barbara Leg, and that crazy little girl who afterward ran away with the Austrian?"

"At least, they had been brought up by people of my own standards," began Mrs. Orvice. "Their mothers—"

But Miss Bowles interrupted. "Oh, mothers! Well, I concede the mother. I've never seen 'mommer,' but they all say she is a strange old party. However, you must remember that it isn't she with whom Jerry is in love."

Mrs. Orvice did not disturb herself to answer this at all. It had never occurred to her that any one, least of all one so sophisticated as Miss Bowles, could suppose Jerry's feelings to be engaged in the matter. But Miss Bowles did not notice her silence, and went on:

"Of course, you've met the mother."

"I visit her by appointment this afternoon," returned Mrs. Orvice, with unmistakable distaste.

"Well," said Miss Bowles, "your dislike of it all makes *me* feel very badly, for I suppose I had more to do with bringing it about than any one else. It

was at my house that they first met, and I said to Jerry at the time: 'There is the girl for you.' I remember that I was awfully afraid that she was going to prefer Prixley."

"Prixley!" cried Mrs. Orvice, who had always had the greatest confidence in Peale's judgment. "Much good that would have done her. Of all women, she seems to me about the least likely to attract Prixley."

"Don't be too sure, my dear, until you know her better; for she has one quality that none of the rest of us have; not you, nor I, nor Prixley; no, nor Jerry, for all his charm. She is lovable."

At this preposterous assertion Mrs. Orvice could only smile.

The visit that afternoon was not a great success. Mrs. Orvice had never before seen the black and green marble hall, the tiger skins and gas-logs. These began, even at the doorway, to affect her unpleasantly. She was angered, too, at the glimpse she caught of the cards of those who had been denied admittance in order to give her audience. Every one was utterly mercenary, she thought.

She was received in the large salon, all gilt and modern tapestry, by Marie Louise, beaming with happiness and a desire to be approved.

In her own room, the girl had revolved the propriety of addressing Mrs. Orvice as "mother." For, after all, what could be tenderer than her relation to Jerry's parent? Fortunately, however, she decided that the title, though endearing, was premature.

Nevertheless, it was distinctly as the future daughter-in-law that she insisted on meeting Mrs. Orvice; only unhappily, in Marie Louise's estimation, the filial relations entailed not so much respect as protection. She desired that Mrs. Orvice should have the most comfortable of the gilt-chairs, hoped she wasn't tired, feared there was a draft, and finally wanted to order the carriage to send her home.

Mrs. Orvice, who had come intending to be merely gracious, refused with some decision to be either petted or, as

she put it to herself, "blessed." She was driven to mentioning that if she had not preferred walking she could have sent for a cab.

Baffled in this manifestation, Marie Louise turned to their only common interest, Jerry; and quoted and explained him, until the lady who had borne him hardly recognized him as her son.

Nor did matters very much improve with the entrance of Mrs. Carman. She had begged not to be made to appear, but Marie Louise had now seen enough of the world to know that, when there was any question of marriage, parents were given a certain fictitious prominence, and she insisted upon her mother's presence.

Even Mrs. Carman was overcome by the mixture of graciousness, simplicity, and aloofness which Mrs. Orvice contrived to present. The poor woman tried to take refuge in silence, but Mrs. Orvice, who kept count, noticed that out of the five sentences uttered, three began: "Well, I presume——"

As she walked out between the marble columns, Mrs. Orvice was saying to herself that she had been grossly deceived, that the girl was not lovable, and the mother was nothing but a dreadful old woman.

At her own house she found Miss Lee waiting for her. The two ladies did not begin their conversation with any expressions of despair or even of disapproval. On the contrary, they both said how satisfactory it would be to see Jerry safely married, how fitted he was to make a woman happy, how admirably adapted he himself was to enjoy the wealth which nature had so evidently intended for him.

Only after she rose to go, did Miss Lee refer faintly to their last fevered interview on the subject of Jerry's intentions.

"I see how wrong I was," she observed, smiling, "Either he loves her or else——"

"Or else what?"

"Or else we shall never get him to the altar."

She left Mrs. Orvice's brains busy,

not altogether disagreeably busy, with the scandals of a broken engagement. Was it still possible that Jerry might back out? Would she blame him? Would she be glad or sorry?

Miss Lee contrived to suggest the same idea to Jerry the next time she saw him. Engagements were, apparently, in her estimation, mere hints of one's inclinations; intimations of a temporary state of mind. "If you are married," some of her sentences began, meaning, as she explained, only that nothing was ever really settled until the cards were out—not always then.

Finding in Jerry's eyes no answering gleam at the temptation, she next allowed herself a somewhat bolder stroke.

Not so very apropos to something he had just said she answered: "Ah, you would not say that if you had ever been in love."

"Ever been in love," cried Jerry. "My dear girl, as if I had not tried my prentice-hand on you."

Now this was extremely disagreeable of Jerry, for he must have known that she cherished not a little tenderness for the incident he referred to so casually. She answered bitingly:

"From me to May Emmons—something of a decline, dear Jerry."

"Not at all, Barbara. An excellent training—a capital preface."

"But preface to what? Ah, Jerry, I sometimes wonder if you are capable of really loving."

"Isn't every one capable of loving the right person?"

"But shall you ever find her?"

"I thought you knew that the search was over."

She turned from him in disgust. He was not being candid, and she could make nothing of him.

Miss Lee even attempted a word or two to Marie Louise herself, but without success. It would have taken a good deal to shake her confident happiness. If she had admired and loved Jerry before her engagement, she now loved him a great deal more, and with better cause.

She felt vaguely that his mere pres-

ence made her, somehow, a different creature, that she no longer uttered the follies that in old times had turned her hot to remember, or if by chance one of her characteristic crudities did escape her, its good-natured reception by Jerry seemed to render it amusing and original rather than blatantly ridiculous. Certainly the change in her was not accomplished by any conscious effort on her part. On the contrary, Jerry, always so unruffled and so completely himself, helped her to be natural, and to slough off her former conception of the grand manner fit for a great heiress.

So infatuated was she that she did not even resent the left-handed compliments of some of her friends, who insisted on telling her how much she had improved since her engagement.

"I'm sure I don't know what would improve me if that didn't," she would answer, with her sudden smile.

It was no wonder that she was happy. Alone with her, he was so amazingly kind and understanding. Poor Marie Louise, who had never been really understood, or, at least, admirably understood, which is the only kind worth having, expanded with gratitude and affection under Jerry's discerning warm approval.

So true was this, that, after some weeks of her engagement, she summoned courage to confess something that had long weighed upon her conscience.

"You know, Jerry," she broke out one evening after dinner, when Mrs. Carman, in accordance with the good old American custom, had left the lovers to themselves, "I think I ought to tell you something."

"Nothing about your past, my dear," returned Jerry lightly. "My own, of course, is hideous, and the mere boastfulness of man might urge me into similar confidences."

"No, it's about the present, too."

"All the worse. If I haven't found it out for myself, I do not deserve to hear."

"But I must tell you."

He protested, but she was firm, and

said finally, with some difficulty: "I blacken my eyebrows."

He looked at her gravely, while her heart beat with terror.

"So, my darling, I was told six months ago."

"You don't mean that every one knows?"

"Almost every one, I think. And what is the result? A perfect outbreak of blackened eyebrows among the blondes of our acquaintance. What higher compliment could you have?"

"How wonderful you are not to despise me! Most men would, I'm sure."

"Bobby Peters wouldn't have stood it for a minute," said Orvice reflectively.

Marie Louise giggled. "He remonstrated with me about it the day of his wedding. I kept wondering then what you would say."

"Why, what could any sensible man say, except that I had heard it already, that I might have found it out for myself, and that I cling to everything that goes to make up your very charming appearance? However, if you'll give me your pencil, I think I could show you how the effect might be made even more delightful."

And, a few minutes later, he might have been seen elongating very slightly the line of those wonderful brows, by the aid of Marie Louise's greased crayon.

"There," he said, "that is quite perfect." And he kissed her to show his complete satisfaction before he turned her to the glass so that she also might admire his handiwork.

The wedding, which was to take place in town early in April, was to be very quiet. Marie Louise had always conceived of her wedding as the very grandest of occasions; the sort of affair that would exclude all other news from the papers for weeks. Nothing showed better the intensity of her feeling for Jerry than her desire for simplicity in the arrangements. It was as if her love of him had raised the ceremony from a social function to a rite.

Early in March the yacht bearing

the Amazon party, delayed in starting, was to put in at Baltimore. Jerry, whose desertion had been taken very ill, had promised to meet them at that port and see them off.

He was to be absent from New York for four days. It was the greatest grief that Marie Louise had yet known.

"Oh, I know I'm foolish," she said to her mother, "but I don't see how I'm to live through the time. I wish I could take an opiate and sleep. I did think when we were once engaged that we should never have to be separated again."

In deference to her wish, Jerry stopped on his way to the train to bid her good-by for the third time.

Holding the lapel of his coat in both hands, with tears in her eyes, she besought him not to let his friends carry him off.

"It's just the sort of thing they might do, and think it a joke—those Englishmen! Of course, their whole expedition is spoiled by your not going. Oh, yes, it is. I believe they have come here to kidnap you."

Jerry assured her that he would escape in the gig and row himself ashore.

"Then you'd be drowned, and that would be worse." She was half in fun, but her emotion was so genuine that Orvice caught her to him, comforting her like a child. After a moment she raised her head.

"And you won't notice those Baltimore girls, will you, dear? Some one told me they were the prettiest in the world."

"You expect me to be met at the train by a delegation of picked Baltimore beauties?"

"Four days is a long time."

"Not quite long enough to make me forget you."

Presently, since trains are unpromising things, he was obliged to take his departure. She watched him drive away, and then, turning from the window and wiping her eyes, she found her mother at her elbow.

"Isn't it awful, mommer?" she broke out. "I did not know it would be so

bad. I keep saying 'only four days.' But it's all to-day and to-morrow, and—— But how selfish I am, thinking only of myself! It's just as hard for him, isn't it?"

"Oh, no," returned Mrs. Carman coolly, "it isn't ever as hard for men, even if they do love you as much as you love them."

"Now, mommer, what do you mean by that? If he does—— Oh, how can you say such things when I'm so unhappy already? Don't you believe that he loves me?"

"Well," answered her mother candidly, "I used to think he did not, but now I've about changed my mind. I rather guess he does."

"Of course he does," said Marie Louise. "Why, I don't know how you could have thought such a thing! Did you think he wanted my money?"

"No."

"Then why should he have wanted to marry me?"

"That's just it. That's what made me change my mind. Why did he, as long as he couldn't know how fond you were of him?"

Marie Louise stared at her mother with large, tearful eyes. She did not answer, but she had taken in the full significance of the speech.

IX.

Three of the interminable days had dragged themselves out, relieved by frequent letters from Jerry, and others, no more frequent, but infinitely longer, from Marie Louise. Never in all her life had her strange, upright, childish characters been so much seen.

For Mrs. Orvice, too, these days were rather dreary. Jerry had told her just before his departure that the day of the wedding was now definitely fixed, and she was employing herself in going over the list of her relations and friends to whom some notice of the occasion must be sent.

The last person in the world whom she expected to see was her future daughter-in-law, and she was very much surprised to hear, on the very

morning of the day Jerry was to return, that Miss Carman was downstairs, and would be glad to see her.

She went down and found the girl standing in the drawing-room, red-eyed and pale. Mrs. Orvice, supposing at first that these symptoms of grief were occasioned merely by Jerry's absence, felt herself unable to sympathize with emotions quite so violent. But the girl's first words dispelled this idea.

"I want you to tell Jerry when he comes back that our engagement is over. I can't ever see him again."

"Oh, what has he done?" cried Mrs. Orvice, with the natural pessimism of mothers.

"Done? Jerry? Nothing but be too good." Marie Louise began to cry with the utmost frankness.

"Then why do you want to break your engagement?"

"I mustn't tell you; at least, not unless you will promise not to tell him."

"My dear, you've got to tell him yourself. You can hardly expect he will be content with no reason at all." Mrs. Orvice spoke kindly enough, but her thought was: "This is what comes of mixing one's self up with this sort of person."

"I shall tell him something, of course. If only I had time to think what it should be," returned the girl, twisting her hands together.

"And what is the truth? That you don't love him?"

It was not necessary to answer; an eloquent, tearful look dismissed the suggestion as preposterous.

"Are you afraid he doesn't love you?"

"Yes, I am, but that isn't it. I knew that all along, only I could have gone on pretending I didn't, if only——" Her voice failed. She turned and leaned her head on the mantelpiece, and sobbed. "I've lost all my money."

There was a short, painful silence, broken only by Marie Louise's sobs, until Mrs. Orvice said gallantly:

"But, my dear, you don't think that that will make any real difference to Jerry?"

"It will make all the difference in the world," the girl answered. "I don't mean he won't still say he is determined to marry me. He will say so, but I can't let him. I won't let him, no matter what any one says. Just think how awful it would be to him to have me and be poor. If he loved me——"

"My dear child," said Mrs. Orvice, really touched by the depth of her grief, "of course he loves you."

"Oh, no, he doesn't, and you don't think it, and you never did," returned Marie Louise, wiping her eyes courageously. "Every one saw it; I saw it, too, only I wouldn't admit it."

"He would never have asked you to marry him, if he had not loved you."

"He didn't. I asked him."

This for an instant seemed almost unanswerable, and Mrs. Orvice did not attempt to answer. Strangely enough, now that she had her heart's desire, now that Jerry might be free by the action of Marie Louise herself, Mrs. Orvice's only terror was that he might accept his freedom, and brand himself in her eyes and the eyes of the world. And yet, she could put his case so plausibly; could say that this girl, accustomed to luxury, could not be happy as a poor man's wife, the cause of such a tragedy as Jerry's having to work for his living. She felt an agonized desire that her son should do the right thing, and a terrible conviction that he was going to do the wrong one.

She found comfort in reiterating, with the utmost apparent faith, that Jerry would never allow his engagement to be broken for any such reason as this.

"Well, we'll see about that," said Marie Louise, with the greatest fierceness. "I'm going away at midnight, and I won't even see him. Oh, I know what you are thinking—that every one will say he threw me over when I lost my money. But, surely, we can think of something that will do. What are we for but that? I can't think of anything, unless I ran off and married the coachman, and he's married already," she added, with a faint attempt at hilarity.

Mrs. Orvice drew the girl down beside her on the sofa. "You are taking this too hard," she said. "There is only one thing for you to do. You must see Jerry and tell him everything. He has a right to be heard, you know."

"Now, how silly that is," cried Marie Louise, utterly unconscious of being uncivil. "Don't you know what he'll say?—that, of course, I am to marry him just the same. And what am I in Jerry's hands? *Pulp*," she ended, her tears bursting out afresh.

Mrs. Orvice tried a new method of attack.

"I don't think you are quite fair to Jerry," she said.

"Oh, how can you say so? How cruel of you! Why am I doing this? For my own happiness? Well, I suppose it is, in a way, for I shouldn't be happy, knowing he had spoiled his whole life for me." She rose. "I'm going now. You can do anything you like, except tell Jerry, only nothing will ever change me."

The first thing Mrs. Orvice did, when the girl had gone, was to fly to the telephone and communicate with Prixley Peale.

Peale was inclined to be a little scornful of her for having asked no questions as to the loss of the fortune. Money, he observed dryly, did not disappear overnight without a cause. What had happened? Mrs. Orvice did not know, and Peale agreed to go and see the girl later in the afternoon.

For the rest of the day, Mrs. Orvice had nothing to do but to wait for Jerry's return, and pray that he might not yield to the temptation of thus having his bonds loosened.

His train was due at four, and about half-past a hansom drove up to the door. She had been expecting him for some fifteen minutes, and in that time she had become desperately nervous, so that her voice shook as she asked without too great interest:

"Had you a pleasant time?"

"Very. Those are wonderful men, and going on the finest trip——"

"Wasn't your train a little late?"

"No, just on time, but I stopped to

see Marie Louise on my way; only," he laughed, "she was out. Isn't that a blow to a man who supposes himself impatiently awaited? I shall go back as soon as I've brushed myself up a little."

Mrs. Orvice felt that the moment had come. "Jerry," she said portentously, "she was not out."

"Not out? Why, what do you mean?"

"She came here this morning. The poor girl is in great distress. She will not see you. She wishes to break off her engagement. She has lost her fortune."

"Lost her fortune!" said Jerry. "Why, that is the deuce and all, isn't it?"

He stood a moment with contracted brows, and then said: "Poor child!" with such heartfelt pity that Mrs. Orvice felt he must be commiserating with her for the loss of more than fortune.

She said: "Jerry, I have never seen a more heart-breaking sight. Her self-sacrifice in breaking off the engagement is incredibly painful. Of course, I told her that nothing would induce you to let her go."

She had meant to speak with an inspiring confidence in his high conduct, but most unfortunately, as she looked at his unmoved demeanor, her last sentence had the rising inflection of a question. To her own rage she heard the sound of an appeal to his better nature in her voice.

He turned toward her coldly. "You told her that?"

"Yes. You *must* marry her, Jerry."

"But why? You yourself don't think I care for her. You don't think her well-adapted to me. You hate her connections. If she hasn't money, what advantage has she?"

"None at all," answered his mother, rising, and laying her hand on his arm. "I have no idea that there is any happiness in the future for you. You are paying a very high penalty for having originally done a dishonorable thing, but I am determined that you shall pay it, Jerry. I don't tell you to think what the world will say; I try not to

care so much about that. But think how you would feel all the rest of your life, knowing that this girl who loves you——"

"Oh, my God!" said Jerry, tearing himself roughly out of her grasp.

The next instant she heard the front door bang and the hansom clatter away.

At this, for the first time, Mrs. Orvice broke down. Roughness from Jerry was so extraordinary that it was almost unbearable. The thought uppermost in her mind, was, after all, what would the world say.

She had had a glimpse of what the universal verdict would be, for even Prixley, over the telephone, had grown cold when she even hinted at the possibility of the engagement's being broken. She did not know that she had conveyed the impression that she had grounds for this fear. But her own terror that Jerry would prove unworthy had so shown forth, that Peale felt, no doubt, she was trying to conceal her knowledge of her son's perfidy.

The result was that Peale was consumed with a fever of rage and contempt, which he himself could hardly account for. He tried his best to reach a more judicial frame of mind before he presented himself at the Carmans'.

The house was in great confusion; trunks were standing about, half-packed, and the footman who answered the door seemed quite uncertain whether or not Miss Carman were at home.

Peale insisted on sending up his card, and he was presently ushered up to the library, which was on the second floor.

He had meant to begin the interview on a strictly legal basis; to question her minutely about the facts of the case, to advise her as to her counsel, to offer himself to go to her father's mine; but the sight of her pallor, the sound of her voice, altered by much weeping, made such a course of conduct almost impossible.

She held out both hands to him. "Oh, I'm so glad you came," she said. "I did want a friend so much, and you

are the only one I have. No one else understands. Mrs. Orvice never liked me, and mommer always knew Jerry didn't really care."

At this proof of Jerry's desertion, Peale felt his pity for the girl rising to dangerous heights. He held her hands tightly, while she went on:

"I can't ask their advice, and I do want help. What can I do so that people won't say he threw me over as soon as I was poor?"

"It will be difficult to prevent," said Peale dryly.

"I know, but I must prevent it." And then, wishing to take away the too tragic note she had been striking, she repeated her mild little joke about the coachman. "I might run off with my coachman, but he's married."

"Well, I'm not married," said Peale; "run off with me."

"Oh, how kind you are!" cried the girl, pressing his hands. "Dear me, how it would have flattered me once to know that you would ever say such a thing to me! Thank you so much, but I can't. I shall never marry. I couldn't marry any one but Jerry."

"Oh, don't say that," answered Peale, "because he isn't worth it." Then, seeing how unpleasant any such suggestion was to her, he added: "No one is. I'm sure I'm not, but I wish you would take me. I am far too old for you, and I have very little to offer you, but you could make me very happy."

A gentle voice at the door said: "Sorry to interfere with you, Prixley, but she belongs to me."

Marie Louise stared at Jerry in astonishment.

"I told them not to let you in," she said.

"My dear, it seems I have as much influence with your servants as you have."

"I told that man of mine I'd dismiss him if he allowed you to get up-stairs."

"And I told him I'd knock him down if he didn't. Fortunately, he did not call my bluff."

"I don't want to see you," said Marie Louise, "so please go away."

"And leave you to listen to these dangerous proposals of Prixley's? I think not. Prixley, I've been brought up to think it isn't honorable to make love to your friend's fiancée."

Though aware that Jerry was not serious in his attack, Peale felt his position did need explanation.

"I had imagined," he said, "that you had withdrawn."

"I think I was the only person whose testimony you should have taken on that point."

"Won't you please go, Jerry?" said Marie Louise.

"No, but perhaps Prixley will."

"I don't want him to go," the girl replied hastily. "He has been so kind. If anything could console me, I'm sure it would be such a compliment as having a gentleman like Mr. Peale ask me to marry him."

Jerry laughed. "It's a form of consolation you will have to do away with in the future, you know."

"I am not going to marry you," she retorted, with the greatest firmness.

"Oh, yes, you are," said Jerry. "Isn't she, Peale?"

"I hope she is," answered Peale seriously. "I should very, very strongly advise her to."

"There, my dear, you can't go against the opinion of your counsel."

Peale rose to go. "I came to talk law," he said, "but I've let myself follow other issues." He smiled. "I shall be at the club for the rest of the afternoon, Jerry, if you want to discuss the legal aspect of the thing."

"He's advising me to sue you for breach of promise," said Jerry, gravely turning to Marie Louise. "Oh, these lawyers!"

Peale did not think it necessary to notice this frivolity. He said to the girl: "Of course, I haven't any of the facts, but perhaps we shall be able to save something out of the wreck. It's worth trying."

"Oh, no, we can't," she answered. "You don't understand. My father never owned the mine, but it doesn't matter. It's all gone."

Peale did not look altogether con-

vinced, but he took his departure in silence.

When he was gone, Jerry sank on the sofa beside Marie Louise, and observed:

"And so you are starting for Stonehurst on the midnight train?"

Marie Louise broke out at this. "Really, that is too much. Did that man tell you? I told him particularly not to."

"It was the first thing he said, after telling me that you were not at home."

"Our engagement is broken, Jerry. I won't marry you."

"You think it your duty to look out for some one who can support you in greater luxury?"

"Oh, Jerry, how can you?"

"No one would blame you, dear. Prudence is an excellent quality."

"You know it isn't that."

"Is it that you don't love me?"

"You oughtn't to ask, but of course I do."

"Then, by a process of exclusion, we seem to have arrived at the answer that you think my motives were mercenary, and so you are trying to let me down easily."

She faced him with great solemnity. "You know that isn't true. I asked you to marry me, and you felt sorry for me because I loved you so. Every one knew it; my mother, and your mother. I tried to pretend that you were hesitating because I was too rich, but I knew that you didn't really care."

There was a short silence—a silence, that is, as far as words go, and then Jerry said gently:

"Marie Louise, I love you."

"No, no, you mustn't—"

"I love you. Believe me, I know the real thing when I feel it. Don't ask me when I began to love you, or why I was going to the Amazon. I don't know. I only know that I love you, and I can't do without you, and I am going to have the experience which other men tell you is so delightful. I am going to work to support a wife."

Perhaps she was not so very difficult to persuade as she had intended to

be. She had not allowed this solution to enter her head, so that now Jerry's obvious sincerity found no organized resistance.

When, much later, Jerry found Peale at the club, it appeared that he sought him, not to ask him to take legal steps to recover Marie Louise's fortune, but to inquire whether or not the secretaryship to Mr. McManus was still open.

Within a week he entered upon his duties, pursuing them with none the less zest because he seemed to regard them as a game designed for his entertainment.

Early in April he asked for a week's holiday, in order to be married, and was not a little perturbed when the great McManus, who had already begun to yield to the charm of his secretary, presented him with a thousand-dollar check as a wedding-present.

Jerry was only restrained from returning it by Peale.

"Why the devil should the man give me a wedding-present?" he asked.

"Because he's your boss," Prixley answered firmly. "You had better make up your mind whether you are his employee or an independent gentleman."

Jerry said no more.

The wedding was a very small one, and, though Mrs. Orvice and Miss Lee

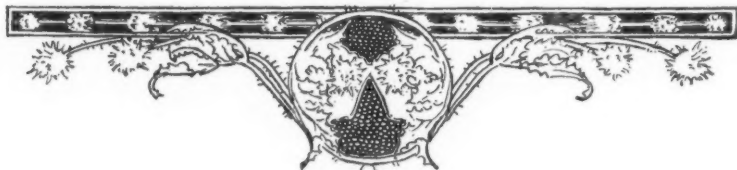
shed some quiet tears, it was on the whole an excessively cheerful occasion.

Exactly a week after, Jerry was back at work, earning the modest two hundred a month, which formed so large a part of his income.

Within this income they actually did contrive to exist for almost two years. At the end of that time, Prixley succeeded in unearthing a great fraud. The claimant, Thomas, was found to be purely hypothetical, existing only in the imagination of the rascally Mr. Mullins, who had concocted a clever plot to possess the whole of the vast estate himself. Through Prixley's untiring efforts, the rapacious attorney was sent to prison, and a large portion of Marie Louise's fortune was restored to her.

Some of Jerry's friends were disappointed that as soon as this was accomplished he gave instant notice to Mr. McManus, and soon pretermitted his labors.

"If I had gone on six months longer," he was in the habit of explaining, "I should never have been able to take up the life of leisure again; and what a calamity that would have been! But I see that there is something in this other thing. Those fellows who work aren't such fools, after all. There's something in it. There's something in it."



KNOWLEDGE

I KNOW it now—and knowing, love
This love that came for good or ill;
More glorious than the morning sky,
More golden than the daffodil.

Your love for me—I know it now—
Impassioned, tender, pure and true.
My love for you—ah, Darling Heart,
It frightens me—my love for you.

CAROLYN WELLS.

AUDREY CRAVEN

By May Sinclair

Author of "THE DIVINE FIRE"

CHAPTER XX.



FROM that afternoon Wyndham kept away from Chelsea Gardens; in fact, he had left town. To do him justice, he honestly thought he was doing "the cleverest thing" for Audrey in leaving her. To think. It would have been the cleverest thing if he could have kept away altogether; but as long as she had the certainty of his return, it was about the stupidest. If he had stayed, they would have resumed their ordinary relations; all might have blown over like a mood, and whatever he knew about her, Audrey herself would never have known it. As it was, he had emphasized the situation by going. And what was more, he had thrown Audrey back on her uninteresting self—the very worst company she could have had at present. She had been used to seeing him almost daily through a whole winter; he had made her dependent on his society for all her interests and pleasures; and when she was suddenly deprived of it, instead of being able to think, she spent her time in miserable longing. She could not think and feel at the same time. Feeling such as hers was incompatible with any form of thinking; it was feeling in a vacuum—the most dangerous kind of all. The emptiness of her life, now that Wyndham was gone, made her say to herself that she could bear anything—anything but that. It made her realize what the years, the long, unspeakable years, would be like when she had given

him up. She looked behind and around her, and there were the gray levels of ordinary existence; she looked below her, and there was the deep; she was going into the darkness of it, swiftly, helplessly, blown on by the wind of vanity. She saw no darkness for the light before her—a nebulous light; but it dazzled her like the sun shining through a fog.

Once, at the fiercest point of her temptation, she felt an impulse to confession—that mysterious instinct which lies somewhere at the heart of all humanity; she had wild thoughts of going to Katherine and telling her all, asking her what she ought to do. Katherine was large-minded, she would not blame her—much; perhaps she would tell her she ought not to give Wyndham up, that she ought to think of him, to be ready to sacrifice the world for his sake. Yes, Katherine was so "clever," she would be a good judge; and Audrey would abide by her judgment. Unhappily, when it came to the point, she was afraid of her judgment—she had always been a little afraid of Katherine. Once she even thought of going to Mr. Flaxman Reed, that "holy anachronism," as she had once heard Wyndham call him. But his judgment was a foregone conclusion; Mr. Flaxman Reed was not large-minded.

Once, too, a gleam of reason came to her. She loved dearly the admiration and good opinion of her world; and she reflected that the step she contemplated meant no congratulations, no wedding-dress, no presents, and no callers. Wedding indeed! As she had read of a similar case in "London Legends," it would

be a "social funeral, with no flowers by request." But these considerations had no weight after an evening spent with Cousin Bella. And though she played on her piano till the lace butterflies on Miss Craven's cap fluttered again (why would Cousin Bella wear caps in defiance of the fashion?), it was no good. If she had had a fine voice, she would have sung at the top of it; failing that medium of expression, she longed to put her fingers in her own ears and scream into Cousin Bella's. And as they yawned in each other's faces, and she realized that something like this might be the program for an indefinite time, she remembered how Langley had called her a metaphysician and a moral philosopher. It was on statements like these, apparently borne out by the fact of his friendship, that she based the flattering fiction of her own intellectuality. Without that fiction Audrey could not have supported life in the rare atmosphere she had accustomed herself to breathe. The conclusion of it all was that, come what might come, she could not give Langley up.

One afternoon she crossed the river for a walk in Battersea Park. It was a warm spring, and down the long avenue the trees were tipped with the flame of bursting buds, like so many green lights turned low. The beds and borders were gay with crocuses and hyacinths, and the open spaces were beginning to look green again. Audrey cared little for these things, but to-day she was somehow aware of them; she felt in her the new life of the spring, as she had felt it a year ago. She walked rapidly from sheer excitement, till she had tired herself out; then she sat down on one of the benches, overlooking the waste ground where the children played. Except for a bright fringe under the iron railings, it was still untouched by spring, and the sallow grass had long been trodden into the dust. Some ragged little crickets were shouting not far off, and near her, by the railings, was a family group—a young father and mother, with their children, from two years old and upward, crawling around them. They

were enjoying a picnic tea in the sunshine, with the voluptuous carelessness of outward show that marks the children of the people. Audrey looked at it all with a faint disgust, but she was too tired to move on to a more cheerful spot. She turned her back on the picnic party, and began to think about Wyndham. He had been away ten days; he said he was going for a fortnight; in another week at the longest she would see him. She was roused by a tug at her petticoats. The two year old, attracted like some wild animal by her stillness, had scrambled through the railings, and was trying to pull its fat little body up by one hand on to the bench beside her. Its other hand grasped firmly a sheaf of fresh grass. It was clean and pretty, and something in its baby face sent a pang to Audrey's heart. She loosened its chubby fingers, hoping it would toddle away; but it gave a wilful chuckle, and stood still, staring at her, reproaching, accusing, in the unconscious cruelty of its innocence. And yet surely the Divine Charity had chosen the tenderest and most delicate means of stirring into life her unborn conscience. Moved by who knows what better impulse, she stooped suddenly down and touched its face with the tips of her gloved fingers. Startled at the strange caress, like some animal stroked too lightly, the little thing made its face swell, and asserted its humanity by a howl. Then it fled from her with a passionate waddle, scattering blades of grass behind it as it went.

Even so do we chase away from us the ministers of grace.

She leaned back, overcome by a sort of moral exhaustion. Her self-love was hurt, as it would have been if a dog had shrunk from her advances; for Audrey was not accustomed to have her favors rejected. She was further irritated by the ostentatious affection of the child's mother as she helped it through the railing with shrill cries of, "There, then, blessums! Did she, then, the naughty lydy!" And when baby echoed "Naughty lydy!" it was as if the two year old had judged her.

She sat a little while longer, and then went away. As she rose she looked sadly back at the family group. The man was lying on his back and letting the children walk about on the top of him. Baby had found peace in sucking an orange and stamping on her father's waist. The woman was strewing paper bags and orange-peel around her in a fine disorder, while she thriftily packed the remains of their meal in a basket. Audrey shuddered; their arrangements were all so ugly and unpleasant. And yet—they were married, they were respectable, they were happy, these terrible people; while she—she was miserable. She had no sense of justice; and she rebelled against the policy of nature, who leaves her coarser children free, and levies her taxes on the aristocracy of feeling.

The sordid domesticity of the scene had glorified by contrast her own dramatic mood. Poor Audrey! She hated vulgarity, and yet she was trying to lay hold on "the great things of life" through the vulgarest of all life's tragedies.

Langley would be in town again in a week. He would ask if she had made up her mind; and she knew now too well the answer she would give him.

But Langley was not in town again in a week, nor yet in a fortnight. And when, at the end of six weeks, he did come back, he came back married—to Miss Alison Fraser.

Nobody ever knew how that came about. Miss Gladys Armstrong, who may be considered an authority, maintained that as Wyndham had the pride which is supposed to be the peculiar property of the Evil One, he could never have proposed to the same woman twice. Consequently Miss Fraser must have proposed to him. Perhaps she had; there are ways of doing these things; and whatever Alison Fraser did she did gracefully. As for her private conscience, in refusing him with conscious magnanimity, she had done no good to anybody, not even herself; in marrying him finally she had saved the situation.

The news threw Audrey into what she imagined to be the beginning of a brain-fever, but which proved to be a state of nervous collapse, lasting, with some intermissions, for a fortnight. At the end of that time—whether it was that she was so fickle a creature that even fate could make no abiding impression on her, or that she was no longer burdened with the decision of a momentous question—to all appearances she recovered. So much so that, when some one sent her an invitation to the private view at the New Gallery, she put on her best clothes (not without a pang) and went.

Alas! the place was full of associations, melancholy with the sheeted ghosts of the past. This time last year she had been to the private view with Ted. They had amused themselves with laughing at the pictures, and wondering how long it would be before one of his would be hanging there. And as she listlessly turned the pages of her catalogue, the first names that caught her attention were: "Haviland, Katherine, 232;" "Haviland, Edward, 296." She turned back the pages hastily to No. 232, and read, "The Witch of Atlas." That picture she knew. No. 296 gave her "Sappho: A Study of a Head."

Of a head? Whose head?

She found the picture (not exactly in the place of honor, but agreeably well hung and with a small crowd before it), and recognized Katherine's striking profile raised in the attitude of a suppliant who implores, the cloud of her dark hair flaming into bronze against a sunset sky. Ted was rather too fond of that trick; but the study was not a mere vulgar success—he had achieved expression in it. It was marked "Sold." There were some lines of verse on the square panel at the base of the frame. Ted could not have afforded such a setting for his picture, but the frame was contributed by Mr. Percival Knowles, the purchaser of the canvas. The same gentleman was also the author of the verse, specially written for the portrait. Knowles, by the by, was an occasional poet—that is to

say, he could burst into poetry occasionally; and Audrey read:

"Oh Aphrodite, queen of dread desire!
By all the dreams that throng Love's
golden ways,
By all the homied vows thy votary pays,
By sacrificial wine, and holy fire!
Thou who hast made my heart thy living
lyre,
Hast thou no gift for me, nor any grace?
Why hast thou turned the light of Love's
sweet face
From me, the sweetest singer of Love's
choir?"

"For songs that charm the long ambrosial
years
The gods bring many gifts, and mine shall
be—
Immortal life in mortal agony—
Vain longing, fanned by winged hopes and
fears
To inextinguishable flame—and tears
Bitter as death, salt as the Lesbian Sea."

Her breast rose and fell with the
lines; by this time she was educated up
to their feeling.

"Who was Sappho, and what did she
do?—I know, but I've forgotten,"
asked a voice in the crowd.

"Oh, the woman who threw herself
at the other fellow's head, you know,
who naturally didn't appreciate the
compliment."

Audrey was not intelligent enough
to refrain from the inward comment:
"How singularly inappropriate! I
should have said Katherine was about
the last person in the world to——"
She turned round and found herself
face to face with the poet. Knowles
had been wandering through the crowd
with evasive eyes, successfully dodging
the ladies of his acquaintance, while his
air of abstraction took all quality of of-
fense from the unerring precision of his
movements. But when he saw Miss
Craven he stopped. He had an inkling
of the truth, and respected her feelings
too much to slight her while Wynd-
ham's marriage was still a topic of the
hour.

"Not bad for the boy, that!" said
he, smiling gently at Sappho. "He's
coming out, isn't he?"

"So are you, I think—in a new line,
too!"

"Ah—er—not quite a new one. I've
been taken that way before."

She was about to make some pretty
speech when they were joined by Ted,
who had not noticed Audrey. His fore-
head puckered slightly when he saw
her, but that was no doubt from sym-
pathy with her probable embarrass-
ment. For the first time in their ac-
quaintance he was indifferent to the
touch of the small hand that had tried
to mold his destiny. If the truth must
be told, in the flush of his success Ted
had found out that his passion for Au-
drey was only the flickering of the
flame on the altar dedicated to eternal
art. He listened to her compliments
without that sense of apotheosis which
(however low he rated it) her criticism
had been wont to produce.

"Don't let's be seen looking at it any
longer," he said at last; "let's go and
pretend to get excited about some other
fellow's work."

So they left Audrey to herself. She
turned back and went down the room
to see "The Witch of Atlas," the lady
robed in her "subtle veil" of star-
beams and mist. Her view of this pic-
ture was somewhat obstructed by a
stout gentleman who, together with a
thin lady, was taking up the whole of
the available space before it. His com-
panion, a badly dressed young woman
with a double eye-glass, was trying to
decipher the lines quoted in her cata-
logue. As Audrey paused she looked
up and stared, as only a woman with a
double eye-glass can stare, at the same
time attracting the stout gentleman's
attention by a movement of her elbow.

"Look, uncle, quick! That's her!
That's the person!"

"What's that, Nettie?" (The stout
gentleman swung round as if on a
pivot as Audrey moved gracefully by.)
"You don't mean to say so? Where's
Ted?"

She walked on through the rooms,
depressed by the meeting with Knowles
—it suggested Wyndham. She would
be meeting *him* next. And indeed she
met him in the first gallery, where her
aimless wanderings had brought her
again.

His wife was with him. Audrey
knew that she must meet her some time,

and she had expected to see in Alison Fraser an enlarged edition of herself; she had even feared an edition de luxe, which would have been intolerable. She was prepared for distinction; but she saw with a finer agony the slight figure, the sweet, proud face, with its setting of pale-gold hair, and, worse than all, the indefinable air of remoteness and reserve which made Mrs. Langley Wyndham more than a "distinguished" woman. Wyndham lifted his hat and would have passed on; but Audrey, to show her perfect self-possession, stopped and held out her hand. He felt it trembling as he took it in a pre-occupied manner; and Mrs. Langley Wyndham became instantly absorbed in picture No. 1.

"Have you seen young Haviland's performance?" asked Wyndham. (He had to say something.)

"Yes; it's a very fine study."

"So Knowles tells me. But everything's a fine study in this collection. There ought to be 'a fine' for the abuse of that expression."

"But it really is; go and see for yourself."

"It's his sister, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"Ah, that accounts for it. He could give his mind to it in that case." Wyndham was surprised at his own fatuity; his remarks sounded like the weird inanities that pass for witticisms in dreams.

"Perhaps. But never mind Mr. Haviland; I want you to introduce me to your wife."

Wyndham looked round; his wife had turned an unconscious back.

"Oh—er—thank you, you're very kind, but—er—we're just going."

He had not meant them so, but his words were like a whip laid across Audrey's shoulders. He moved on, and his wife joined him.

Audrey came across them half an hour later, stooping over some designs in black and white. She saw Mrs. Langley Wyndham look up in her husband's face with a smile, raising her golden eyebrows. The look was one

of those intimate trifles that have no meaning beyond the two persons concerned in it. For Audrey, smarting from Wyndham's insult, it was the flick of the lash in her face.

CHAPTER XXI.

In the autumn of that year Audrey woke and found herself the classic of the hour, a literary queen without a rival. Wyndham's great work was finished, and it stood alone. Not another heroine of fiction could lift her head beside Laura, the leading character of "An Idyll of Piccadilly." He himself owned, almost with emotion, that it was the best thing he had ever done. He had not touched the surface this time; he had gone deep down to the springs of human nature. He had not merely analyzed the woman till her character lay in ruins around him, but he had built her up again out of the psychic atoms, and Laura was alive. She showed the hand of the master by her own nullity. In her splendid vanity she was like some piece of elaborate golden fretwork, from which the substance had been refined by excess of workmanship.

The voice of criticism was one voice; there arose a unanimous hymn of praise from every literary "organ" in the country. It was Mr. Langley Wyndham's masterpiece, a work that left the excellence of "London Legends" far behind it on a lower plane. Though there was no falling off in point of style, the author had found something better to do this time than to cultivate the flowers of perfect speech. "Laura" was a triumph of intimate characterization. And the brutal touches that disfigured his former work were absent from this; he had shown us that the boldest, most inflexible realism is compatible with a delicacy worthy of the daintiest of esoteric ideals.

The book, dedicated "To my Wife," appeared early in October. By November the question of the sources was opened out, and it began to be whispered (a whisper that could be traced to the private utterances of Miss Gladys

Armstrong) that the prototype of Laura was a Miss Audrey Craven. In the person of her ubiquitous double, Miss Audrey Craven became a leading figure in London society. Then bit by bit the news got into the papers, and Wyndham's *succès d'estime* was followed by *succès de scandale*, which promised to treble his editions.

Thus Audrey, unable to achieve greatness, had greatness thrust upon her; and the weight of it bowed her to the earth. The earth? As she read on, the earth seemed to crumble away from under her feet, leaving her baseless and alone before that terrifying apocalypse. Wyndham had trained her intelligence till it could appreciate the force of every chapter in his book of revelations. At last she saw herself as she was. And yet—could that be she? That mixture of vanity, stupidity, and passion? To be sure, he had been careful to give her brown hair instead of telltale red, and skilfully to alter the plot of her life with all details of time and place; but—what had he said? "Light as air, fluent as water, a being mingled of fire and a little earth; fickle as the wind that blew her in a wavering line across the surface of things." "Modern. and of stuff so fine that it chafed under the very breath of disapproval; and yet with a little malleable heart in it compounded of the most primeval of affections." She turned over the pages; everywhere she came upon the same thing. Now the phrases were spun out fine, they were subtle, they seemed to cling round her and stifle her; now they were short and keen, and they cut like knives. "Women may be divided into three classes—the virtuous, the flirtuous, and the non-virtuous. The middle class is by far the largest. It shades off finely into the two extremes. Laura belonged to it." "The moon was up, and Diana, divine sportswoman, was abroad, hunting big game." "Laura had made a virtue of necessity. She said that proved the necessity of virtue."

Oh, the cruelty of it! Would Ted, would Vincent, have done this if they had had it in their power? True, they

had reproached her; but it was to her face, alone in her own drawing-room, where she had a chance of defending herself. They would not have held her up to public scorn. And they had some right to blame her—she saw that now. But what had she done to deserve this from Langley? How had he found it in his heart to speak against her? She had loved him. Yes, she had known many a passing pain, but she had never really suffered until now. That was a part of her education that had been neglected hitherto. Only an accomplished student of human nature could have coached her through the highest branches of it.

Having set the scandal successfully afloat, the society papers began to utter a feeble protest against it—thus increasing their own reputation for a refined morality. But they had no power to turn the tide, and the scandal floated on. In society itself judgment was divided. Whether "Laura" was or was not a work of the highest art, was a question you might have heard discussed at every other dinner-table. Perhaps the criticism that was most to the point was that of Miss Gladys Armstrong, who proclaimed publicly that Langley Wyndham labored under the disadvantage of not being a woman, and having no imagination to make up for it. Meanwhile the tone of the larger reviews remained unchanged. The reviewers, to a man, had committed themselves to the position that the book was Wyndham's masterpiece; and nobody could be found to go back on that opinion.

But in all that concert of adulation one voice was silent—the only voice that Wyndham cared to hear, that of Percival Knowles. The others might howl in chorus, and it would not be worth his while even to listen; he was looking forward to Knowles' long, impressive solo. But that solo never came, neither could the note of Knowles be detected in the intricate chorus. It was strange. Knowles had been the high priest of the new Wyndham worship, and to him the eminent novelist had looked for sympathy and appreciation. But

Knowles had made no sign. They had avoided the subject whenever they met; Wyndham was not so hardened by authorship as to have lost the instinctive delicacy felt by the creator at the birth of his book. Knowles seemed only too much inclined to respect that delicacy. Finally, Wyndham resolved to go and see his friend alone, and tentatively sound him on the subject of "Laura." He proposed to himself a pleasant evening's chat, in which that lady would be discussed in all her bearings, and he would enjoy a foretaste of the praise ere long to be dealt out to him before an admiring public. On his way to Knowles' rooms he heard in fancy the congratulation, the temperate flattery, the fine, discriminating phrase.

He found Knowles amusing himself with a blue pencil and Miss Armstrong's last novel. "Laura: An Idyll of Piccadilly" lay on the table beside him, its pages cut, but with none of those slips of paper between them which marked the other books put aside for review. Knowles greeted his friend with an embarrassed laugh, and they fell to discussing every question of the hour except the burning one for Wyndham. By the rapidity of his conversational maneuvers, it was evident that the critic wanted to steer clear of that topic. Wyndham, however, after ambling round and round it for some time with no effect, suddenly brought up straight in front of it with:

"By the bye, have you condescended to read my last fairy-tale?"

"What, the Mayfair tale?" said Knowles, with deft pleasantry. "Yes, of course I've read it."

"What do you think of it?"

Knowles suddenly looked grave. "Well, at the moment, I had much rather not tell you."

"Really? Well, I suppose I shall know some day."

Knowles looked as if he were struggling with an unpleasant duty, and it were getting the better of him.

"Not from me, I'm afraid. It will be the first work of yours I have left unnoticed. As I can't review it favorably, I prefer not to notice it at all."

"You surely don't suppose that I came here to fish for a review?"

"I do not."

"Thanks. I don't deny that I should have appreciated the public expression of your opinion, favorable or unfavorable. But I respect your scruples as far as I understand them. The only thing is——"

He paused; it was his turn to feel uncomfortable.

"Is what?"

"Well, after the way you've delivered yourself on my other books, which are feebleness itself compared with this one, I must say your present attitude astonishes me."

"I've given you my reasons for it."

"No; that's what you've not done. Surely we've known each other too long for this foolishness. Of course, it's considerate of you not to damn me for the entertainment of the British public; but you know you're the only man in England whose judgment I care about, and I confess I'd like to have your private opinion—the usual honest and candid thing, you know. I'm not talking of gods, men, and columns."

Knowles sat silent, frowning.

"Oh, well, of course, if you'd rather not, there's nothing more to be said."

"Not much."

But Wyndham's palpitating egoism was martyred by this silence beyond endurance, and he burst out in spite of himself:

"But it's inconceivable to me, after the way you've treated my first crude work. You must have set up some new canons of art since then. Otherwise I should say you were inconsistent."

But Knowles was not to be drawn out, if he could possibly help it.

"Do you mind telling me one thing—have you anything to say against its form?"

"Not a word. I admit that in form it's about as perfect as it well could be. I—er——" (he was beginning to feel that he could not help it) "object to your use of your matter."

"What on earth do you mean?"

"I mean what I say."

"Please explain."

"Very well. Since you so earnestly desire my honest and candid opinion, you shall have it. You remind me that I praised your earlier work, and suggest my inconsistency in not approving of your latest. My praise was sincere. I thought, and I have never changed my opinion, that the originality of your first books amounted to genius. Your last, however great its other qualities, has not that merit. It is, I think, conspicuously destitute of imagination."

"Do you deny its vitality—its faithfulness to nature?"

"Certainly not. I object to it as a barefaced plagiarism from nature."

"Then at least you'll admit that my heroine lives?"

"She does, unfortunately. Wouldn't it have been better taste to wait till she was decently dead?"

"Oh—I see. You mean *that*."

"Yes; I mean that. If you had no respect for your own reputation, you might have thought of Miss Craven's."

"Excuse me, this is simply irrelevant nonsense, and most unworthy of you. Miss Craven, as you perfectly well know, is one manifestation of the eternal flirt. I seized on the type she belongs to, and individualized it."

"You did nothing of the sort. You seized on the individual and put her into type—a very different thing. Do you imagine that life will ever be the same to that poor woman again? I never liked Miss Craven, but she was harmless, even nice, before you got hold of her and spoiled her, by making her think herself clever. Isn't that what happens to Laura?"

"That—among other things."

"Other things, also slavishly copied from Miss Craven. I recognize the faithfulness of your portraiture in all its details; so does she and everybody else."

"Knowles, you talk like the lay fool. Surely you know how all fiction, worthy of the name, is made? I took what lay nearest at hand, as hundreds of novelists have done before me; though as for that, there's not an incident in the book that is not the purest fiction. You don't give me credit—I won't say for

originality, but—for ordinary reconstructive ability."

"I give you credit for having made the most of quite exceptional advantages. You best know how you obtained them."

Wyndham reflected a moment, then looked Knowles in the face.

"I assure you solemnly there was never any question of Miss Craven's honor."

Knowles raised his eyebrows. "I didn't suppose for a moment there was. How about your own, though? Your notions of honor strike me as being quaintly original—rather more original than your Piccadyllic heroine."

Knowles was not bad-tempered, but he was a frequent cause of bad temper in other people. It was with the utmost difficulty that Wyndham controlled himself for a final effort to evade the personal, and set the question at large on general grounds.

"Then I suppose you would deny the right of any artist to make use of living material?"

Knowles yawned. "I don't attempt to deny anything. I'm debating another question."

"What is that?" Wyndham smiled an uneasy, muscular smile.

"Whether it isn't my duty to kick you, or, rather, to *try* to kick you, out of this room."

"Really; and what for? For the crime of writing a successful story?"

"For the perpetration of the most consummate piece of literary scoundrelism on record."

As that statement was accompanied by a nervous twitching of the lips which Wyndham was at liberty to take for a smile, he held out his hand to Knowles before saying good night.

"My dear Knowles, if *your* notions of literary honor held good, there would be an end of realism."

"The end of realism, my dear Wyndham, is the thing of all others I most desire to see."

They had shaken hands; but Wyndham understood his friend, and he knew as certainly as if Knowles had told him so that Audrey Craven, the woman

whom neither of them loved, had avenged herself. She had struck, through Laura, at the friendship of his life. He was also informed of one or two facts about himself which had not as yet come within the range of his observation. He consoled himself with the reflection that the temptations of genius are not those of other men. And perhaps he was right.

Knowles sat down to his review of Miss Armstrong's book with unruffled urbanity. He wrote: "This authoress belongs to a select but rapidly increasing band of thinkers. There may be schisms in the new school with regard to details, but on the whole it is a united one. The members are unanimous in their fearless optimism. One and all they preach the same hopeful doctrine, that the attainment of a high standard of immodesty by woman will in time make morality possible for man."

He went to bed vowing that of all professions, that chosen by the man of letters is the most detestable.

CHAPTER XXII.

That winter was a hard one for the Havilands; they were at the very lowest ebb of their resources, short of being actually in debt. The reclaiming of Hardy had been an expensive undertaking for Katherine in more ways than one. And naturally the more successful her efforts were the more time they consumed. She had been so busy all summer finishing off old work that she had not been able to take up anything fresh. She had even been obliged to send away sitters, and they had betaken themselves elsewhere. The "Witch" had not sold, though she had won a big paragraph all to herself in "Modern Art." In her first enthusiasm over Ted's success Katherine had encouraged him to give up his pot-boilers. She had taken over some of his black-and-white work herself. And in the midst of it all she was engaged on a portrait of Vincent. They were so dependent on what they earned that these serious interruptions to work threat-

ened an inroad on their small capital. Now, they might any day have applied to Mr. Pigott for a loan, and rejoiced that worthy gentleman's heart; but such a step was the last indignity, not even to be contemplated by Ted and Katherine. And even if their pride had not stood in their way, that source of revenue seemed closed to them now. Ted and his uncle had had an unfortunate encounter in the New Gallery. The fact that he was indebted to Katherine for an invitation to the private view had not prevented Mr. Pigott from speaking his mind freely to her brother on the subject of the "Witch." He said he could have forgiven Ted for painting such a picture. He could have forgiven Katherine, too, if it had not been for her ability—that made her doubly responsible. Ted tried to soothe him; he led him gently away from the spot; he promised to do all he could to induce Katherine to cultivate the grace of stupidity; but it was useless. The old gentleman stood to his ground, and Ted left him there. He received a letter from him the next morning:

DEAR EDWARD: I parted from you yesterday more in sorrow than in anger. I need not tell you how deeply shocked and grieved I was to learn from a literary young friend that the subject of your sister's picture is taken from the works of the atheist Shelley—a man whose unprincipled life, I am told, is an all-sufficient commentary on his opinions.

Your cousin Nettie is earning a modest competence by poker-work, and the painting of flowers, birds, and other innocent and beautiful objects. Why cannot Katherine do the same?

When she is willing to give up her present pursuits for some becoming occupation, let her be assured of my ready encouragement and help. Till then, no more.

From your affectionate uncle,

JAMES PIGOTT.

Mr. Pigott had written his last sentence advisedly. "Some day," he said to himself, "those young people will have to put their pride in their pocket." He might have known that the Haviland pride was not of the kind that goes conveniently into any pocket, even an empty one.

But Katherine worked her hardest, and gave little heed to these things. She

saw her own chances of success dwindling farther into the distance, and was surprised to see how little she cared; for a curious callousness had come over her of late. Selfish ambition—selfish, because it often persists in living when all other things are dead—seemed to have died in her at last. Had she overcome it? Or was it that she had really ceased to care? She had too much to think of to be able to settle that question just now.

After all, she had another source of pride. Vincent had begun by looking to her as a protection against his worst self; and when his mother died suddenly that winter, his last link with home being broken, he became more and more dependent on Katherine. And now, though the tie of comradeship between them was closer than ever, he had no longer any need of her. He could go alone. His will was free, his intellect was awake. He read hard now. All his old ardors and enthusiasms returned to him; he worked on the pioneer book, recasting his favorite parts, beating the whole into shape, and hunting down the superfluous adjective with a manly delight in the new sport. Katherine had shown the revised manuscript to Knowles, and he had found her a publisher and worked him into the right frame of mind. Katherine had suppressed part of that publisher's verdict—it was to the effect that, though the text was up to the average merit of its kind, the illustrations would form the most valuable portion of the work.

Hardy had submitted the final revision of his proofs to Katherine. But on one point he was resolute: "I want the dedication to stand as it is, sis." And Katherine nodded her head and was silent.

He often talked about Audrey now. He was no longer bitter and vindictive, as he had been in the days of his degradation. His old feeling for her had returned to him, unchanged, except for the refining process he himself had undergone. His love was ennobled now by an infinite pity. Not that he had lost sight of what she had done for him;

but now that his eyes were clearer, he saw her as she was, and felt to the full the pathos of her vanity.

Wyndham's book was severely criticized in Devon Street. One day, about four months after its appearance, Hardy had returned to the subject nearest his heart, and was discussing it with Katherine as he sat to her for his portrait, now nearly finished. He had just pleasantly told her that he wished he had managed to fall in love with her instead of with Audrey; she would have made something very different of him—a remark to which Katherine made no answer, treating it, as Hardy thought, with the contempt it deserved. Then he broke out, as he had done many a time before:

"I don't know how it is. When I was away from her, I used to think of her as a sort of amateur angel leading me on." (Katherine smiled; it was very evident that Audrey had "led him on.") "When I was with her she seemed to be a little devil, encouraging everything that was bad in me. I don't know how she did it; but she did. And yet, Kathy, whatever they may say, I don't believe she's bad. I don't swear, of course, that she's a paragon of goodness—"

"Isn't there a medium?"

"But she was a sweet little thing before she met that scoundrel Wyndham. Wasn't she?"

But Katherine was giving the whole of her attention to Vincent's nose.

"Putting Audrey out of the question, I don't think much of Mr. Langley Wyndham. I don't like his books; I can't breathe in his stuffy drawing-rooms. Why can't the fellow open his windows sometimes, and let in a little of God's fresh air? As you know, I believe he's even a shadier character than I am."

"He hasn't got a character; it's all run to literature."

"H'm—I'm not so sure about that."

Katherine had laid down her brushes, and was examining her work with her head on one side. "Well, he can't draw a character, anyhow; Laura's simply impossible."

"I don't know. Laura is Audrey, and Audrey's a funny person."

"I used to think that Audrey wasn't a person—that she was made up of little bits of people stuck together."

"That's not bad, sis. She is made up of bits of people stuck together."

"Yes; but the thing is, what makes them stick? Mr. Wyndham doesn't go into that, and *that's* Audrey. His work is clever—too clever by half—but it's terribly superficial."

Hardy meditated on that saying; then he began again.

"You've done a great deal for me, Kathy. I sometimes think that if you'd given your mind to it, you could have made something of Audrey. You know, poor little thing, she used to think she was very strong-minded; but she was more easily twisted about than any woman I know. That's what made her so fickle. If there's any truth in that stupid story of Wyndham's, she must have been like a piece of putty in his hands. I believe, if you could have got hold of her, you could have done her some good."

"I don't believe in doing people good."

"I do. I'm a case in point."

"No, you're not."

"I am. You did *me* good."

"I'm very glad to hear it. If I did, it's because I never thought about it. Now, if I tried my hand on Audrey, I should set to work with the fixed intention of doing her good; therefore I should fail miserably. It's a different thing altogether."

"I see no difference myself."

Katherine was silent. Her charity had covered the multitude of Vincent's sins. Why had she not been able to spare a corner of it for Audrey's?

"Come," said Hardy, "it's not as if she was really very bad."

"No, it's not; there'd be some chance then. There is a medium, and the medium is hopeless. The wonder is you never found that out."

"I did. I knew it all the time; yet I loved her. It made no difference—nothing ever will. I've tried to kill my feeling for her, but it's no use—I can't.

I should have to kill myself first; and even then I believe I should find it waiting for me in Hades when I got there."

"After all, why should you try to kill it, Vincent?"

"It's the shame of it, sis."

Katherine might have thought that on the contrary he seemed rather proud of the permanence of his affections, but she was too much preoccupied to be aware of his moral absurdity.

"Well, I don't know much about these things; but it seems to me that even if she doesn't love you, even if she isn't everything you thought she was, there's no reason to be ashamed of loving her."

"Ah, Kathy, you never loved any one like that."

Her color changed. "No. It isn't every one who can love like that."

"What would you do if you were in my case—if you'd given yourself away like me? Supposing you went and lost your little heart to some man-fiend who was, we'll say, about as bad a lot as I am, and who had the execrable taste not to care a rap for you—wouldn't you feel ashamed of him and yourself, too?"

Katherine's white face flushed; she looked away from him, and answered steadily:

"No, I wouldn't."

He thought he had hurt her feelings, and was about to change the subject when she turned a beaming face to him.

"But, then, you see, I don't love anything much."

"Good as you are, you'd be a better woman if you did."

"Of course there are exceptions. I've some sort of affection for the 'Witch' and Ted."

"Ted is a very fine boy, and the 'Witch' is a very fine picture, but—well, some day you'll have an affection for something else; it won't be a boy, and it won't be a picture. Then, sis, you'll know what it is to feel, and your art will go pop."

"Oh, I hope not. But it's not true; look at Ted."

"Ted's a man, and you are a woman. Ten to one, a really great passion im-

proves a man's art—it plays the deuce with a woman's."

"I don't believe it!" said Katherine, with rather more warmth than the occasion demanded.

"Shall I tell you what you've been doing, sis? First of all, you've tried to live two lives and get the best out of each. That was tempting Providence, as Mrs. Rogers would say. You found that wouldn't work, so you said to yourself: 'I give it up. Here goes; I'll be a woman at all costs. I'll know what it is to love.'"

Katherine took up her brushes again, and in spite of herself moved one foot impatiently. Hardy went on, well pleased with his own lucidity:

"And you gave up the only thing you really cared about, and played at being the slave of duty, the devoted sister."

She sighed (was it a sigh of relief?).

"You're wrong. I'm anything but a devoted sister."

"Yes, you're anything but a devoted sister. I'm going to claim one of the privileges of friendship—that of speaking unpleasant truths in the unpleasantest way possible."

"Go on. This is getting interesting."

"I repeat, then, you're not a truly devoted sister. A truly devoted sister would give her brother a chance of developing some moral fiber on his own account. Ever since you two lived together you've been making noble sacrifices. Now two can't play at that game, and the boy hasn't had a chance. The consequence is, he won't work; he prefers taking it easy."

"That was Audrey's fault, not mine."

"Yes, but you encouraged him; and now he does what he likes, young monkey, and you do all the pot-boilers. And you're making yourself ill over them. So much for Ted. I've given him a hint, and he took it very well. Now for the 'Witch.' I believe in your heart of hearts you love her better than everybody else put together. And now you're off on the other tack; you're trying to sit on the artist in you that you may develop the woman. I mean the other way about; you're sitting on the

woman that you may develop the artist."

"Aren't you getting a little mixed?"

"That plan works worse than all. Let me implore you not to go on with it. If you only knew it, there's nothing that you will ever do that's lovelier than your own womanhood. Whatever you do, don't kill that. Don't go on hardening your heart to everything human till there's no sweetness left in your nature, Kathy. I want my little sister to make the best of her life. Some day some good man will ask you to be his wife. If, when that day comes, you don't know how to love, little woman, all the success in the world won't make up to you for the happiness you have missed."

"Oh, Vincent, if you only knew how funny you are!" She laughed the laugh that Vincent loved to hear, and when she looked at him her eyelashes were all wet with it.

"All right, sis. Some day you'll own that your elder brother wasn't such a fool as you think him."

"I—I don't think you a fool. I only wish you knew how frightfully funny you are! No, I don't, though," she added, below her breath.

But Vincent was quite unable to see wherein lay the humor of his excellent remarks. He considered that his experience gave him a right to speak with authority on questions of feeling. But it had not made him understand everything.

The next morning Katherine was sitting before her easel, waiting for Vincent to come up for the last sitting. It was a raw, cold day, and her fingers felt numbed as they took up the brushes. Ted had made a promise to Hardy to do his fair share of the more remunerative work. Before keeping it, he was giving a few final touches to one of the figures in his Dante study of Paolo and Francesca, swept like leaves on the wind of hell. He was in high good-humor, and as he worked he talked incessantly, quoting from an imaginary review. "In the genius of Mr. Edward Haviland we have a new Avatar of the spirit of art. Mr. Haviland is the

disciple of no school. He owes no debt either to the past or to the present. He works in a noble freedom from prejudice and preconception, uncorrupted by custom as he is untrammelled by tradition. If we may classify what is above and beyond classification, we should say that in matter Mr. Haviland is an idealist, while in form he is an ultrarealist. We dare to prophesy that he will become the founder of a new romantico-classical school in the near future——"

"Oh, Ted, do be quiet, and let me think for a minute."

"What's the matter, Kathy?"

"I don't know. I think I'm tired, or else it's the cold."

Ted looked at her earnestly (for him), and then came over to her and stroked her hair. "There's something wrong. Won't you confide in your brother?"

"I'm all right—only lazy."

"Can't—can't I do anything?"

"Well, perhaps. I don't want you to give up much of your time to it; but if you'd finish some of those black-and-white things—I don't feel equal to tackling them all single-handed."

"Oh," said the boy, turning very red, "why didn't you say so before?" He sat down and began at once on the pile of manuscripts waiting to be illustrated. But he continued to talk. "I saw Vincent the other day, and he told me his opinion of you pretty plainly."

"What did he say?"

"Why, that you've sacrificed your poor brother to your desire to cut a moral figure; that you've been cultivating all sorts of extravagant virtues at my expense. I might have been playing the most heroic parts, and getting any amount of applause, if you hadn't selfishly bagged all the best ones for yourself. You've taken up the whole of the stage, so that I haven't had room even to exercise the minor virtues. Just reach me that sheaf of crayons, there's a good girl. Thanks." Ted put on a judicial air, and chose a crayon. "Look there! you've taken the most uncomfortable chair and the worst light in the studio, when I might have been posing

in them all the time. I haven't had half a chance. Vincent said so. No wonder he's disgusted with you. Ah! that's not so bad for a mere tyro. No, Kathy, he's quite right. You're an angel, and I've been a lazy scoundrel. But you'll admit that during my painful mental affliction I wasn't quite responsible. And afterward—well, how was I to know? I thought we were getting on very nicely."

"So we were, Ted—up till now."

Her last words were so charged with feeling that Ted looked up surprised. But he said nothing, being a person of tact.

The sitting that morning was not a long one. Hardy seemed tired and depressed. After posing patiently for half an hour he gave it up.

"It's no good this morning. I must go out and get a little warmth into me. You people had better come, too."

"It's such a horrid day," pleaded Katherine. "You'll get exceedingly wet, and come back no warmer. It's going to rain or snow, or something." As she spoke, the first drops of a cold sleet rattled on the skylight.

But Vincent was obstinate and restless.

"I must go, if it's only for a turn on the Embankment. What with my book and your picture, I haven't stretched my legs all week. Come along, Ted. You'll die, Kathy, if you persist in wallowing in oil-paint like that, and taking no exercise."

They set out before a cutting north-easter and a sharp shower of rain that froze as it fell. Katherine watched them as they crossed the street and turned on to the Embankment. The wind came round the corner, as a north-easter will, and through the window-sash, chilling her as she stood. "There's nobody more surprised than myself," she said. "And yet I might have known that if I went in for this sort of thing, I should make a mess of it." She went back to the fire, and settled herself in the attitude of thought. There was no end to her thinking now. Perhaps that was the reason why she was always tired. Hitherto she had

triumphed over fatigue and privation by a power which seemed inexhaustible, and was certainly mysterious. Much of it was due to sheer youth and health, and to the exercise which gave her a steady hand and a cool head—much, doubtless, to her unflinching will; but Katherine was hardly aware how far her strength had lain in the absence of temptation to any feminine weakness. Hitherto she had seen her object always in a clear, untroubled air, and her work had gained something of her life's austere and passionless serenity. Now it was all different, and she was thinking of what had made that difference.

Ted came back glowing from his walk; but Vincent was colder than ever. He sat shivering over the Havilands' fire all afternoon, and went to bed early.

"We'll finish that sitting to-morrow, sis," he said wearily. Ted went out again to dine with Knowles, and Katherine was left alone.

It might have been her own mood, or the shadow of Vincent's, but she was depressed with vague presentiments of trouble. They gathered like the formless winter clouds, without falling in any rain. Then she realized that she was very tired. She wrapped herself in a rug and lay down on the couch to rest. And rest came as it comes after a sleepless night, not in sleep deep and restorative, but in a gentle numbing of the brain. She woke out of her stupor refreshed. The cloud had rolled away, and she could work again. She sat down to the last pile of Vincent's proofs.

When she had finished them, she turned over the pages again. The reading had brought back to her the last eighteen months, with all the meaning that they had for her now. She looked back and thought of the years when she had first worked for Ted, of the precious time that Audrey had wasted. The fatalism that was her mood so often now told her that these things *had to be*. And it was better, infinitely better, for Ted to have had that experience. She looked back on the year that Vincent had wasted out of his own

life, and saw that that, too, had to be. There had been vicarious salvation even there. Ted had once told her that there was a time when, as he expressed it, he would have walked calmly to perdition, if Vincent had not gone before him and shown him what was there. She looked back on that year of her own life, "wasted," as she had once thought—the year she had given up so grudgingly at the beginning, so freely at the end—and she was content.

And now she was giving up, not time alone, and thought, and labor, but love—love that could have no certain reward but pain. And she was still content. At first she had been astonished and indignant at her own capacity for emotion; it was as if her nature had suddenly revealed itself in a new and unpleasant light. Then she had grown accustomed to it. Yesterday she was even amused at the strangeness and the fatuity of it all. She described herself as a bungling amateur wandering out of her own line and attempting the impossible. Clearly she should have left this sort of thing to people like Audrey, to whose genius it was suited, and who might hope to attain some success in it; but for her the love of art was quite incompatible with the art of love. She could have imagined herself entertaining these feelings for some one like Percival Knowles, for instance, who was clever and had an educated sense of humor, who wrote verses for her and flattered her artistic vanity; but to have fixed upon Vincent, of all people in the world! She must have done it because it was impossible. That was what she had said yesterday; but to-day she understood. Had she not helped to make Vincent a man that she could love without shame? He was the work of her hands, that which her own fingers had made. It was natural that she should love her own work. Was she not an artist before everything, as he had said? Her tears came, and after her tears a calm, in which she heard the beating of a heart that was not her own, and felt the pulse of the divine fate that moves through human things.

Then she asked herself: Was Vin-

cent right? What effect had this curious experience really had on her painting? She felt no personal interest in the answer, but she got up and went to the easel. Her portrait of Vincent was finished—all but the right hand, that was still in outline. It was strange. Ted's best work had begun with his head of Audrey. What about her own? She saw through her tears that in all her long and hateful apprenticeship to portrait-painting, nothing that she had ever done could compare with this last. There was a new quality in it, something that she had once despaired of attaining. And that was character. She had painted the man himself, as she saw him. Not the Vincent of any particular hour, but Vincent with the memory of the past, and the hope of the future in his face. All the infinite suggestion and pathos, the complex expression that life had left on it, was there. If she had not loved Vincent—loved him not only as he was, but as he might have been—would she have known how to paint like that? Although her womanhood would never receive the full reward of its devotion, that debt had been paid back to her art with interest. The artistic voice told her that Vincent was wrong; that for her what women call love had meant knowledge; that her strength would henceforth lie in the visible rendering of character; and that work of such a high order would command immediate success.

And the voice of her womanhood cried out in anguish: "All the success in the world won't make up to you for the happiness you have missed."

There was no sitting the next day; for Vincent was in bed, ill, with congestion of the lungs.

CHAPTER XXIII.

There is a little village in North Devon, sheltered from the sea by a low range of sand-hills that stretches for miles on each side of it. The coast turns westward here, and no cliff breaks that line of billowy sand; northward and southward it goes, with the rhythmic monotony of the sea. The sand-

hills are dotted with tufts of the long starr-grass, where the rabbits sit; inland they are covered with fine blades bitten short by the sheep. Seaward lies the hard-ribbed sand, glistening with salt, and fringed with the white surf of the Atlantic.

On the coast, about a mile from the village, there is a long one-storied bungalow, built on the sand-hills. The sand is in the garden, where no flowers grow but sea-pinks and the wild horn-poppy; it lies in drifts about the veranda, and is whirled by the Atlantic storms on to the low-thatched roof. The house stands alone but for a few fishermen's huts beside it, huddled close together for neighborhood.

Here, because it was the most man-forsaken spot she knew, Audrey had come, exchanging the roar of London for the roar of the Atlantic. She thought she would find consolation in the presence of nature. London had become intolerable to her. Everywhere she turned she was reminded of the hateful "Laura." "Laura" stood open in the window of every book-shop; "Laura" lay on every drawing-room table; there was no getting away from her. And yet Audrey's notoriety had won her more friends than she had ever had before. Everywhere people were kind to her; they made much of her; they said it was "hard lines," it was "a shame," "execrable," "unpardonable," and they assured her that nobody thought a bit the worse of her for all that. Some even went so far as to declare that they saw not the remotest resemblance between her and the popular heroine. But it was no use. Nothing could raise her in her own esteem. She fled. She longed to be alone with nature. She took the bungalow for the winter; and once there, she wished she had never come.

She arrived in a storm that lasted some days. She thought she would have gone mad simply with hearing the mad wind and sea. It was the same whether she sat indoors listening to them, or she walked out, battling with the wreaths of whirling sand. After the storm came the dull, gray, heaving

calm—always the rolling clouds, the rolling sand-hills, and the rolling sea. That was infinitely worse. And to add to her depression, Audrey had never been so rigidly confined to the society of her chaperon; there was nobody else to see or hear, and the boundaries of the poor lady's intellect were conspicuous in the melancholy waste. There was no escape from her except into the cold monotony without.

Then February set in warm though gray. One morning Audrey was able to sit out in a sunny hollow of the sand-hills, where the rabbits had flattened a nest for her. Then she could think.

She was in the presence of nature. Art was nothing to this. Art, in the time of her brief acquaintance with it, had baffled her, and given her a hint of her own feebleness; but nature was the great Incomprehensible—and she was alone with it. Alone, in a lonely land, peopled mostly by the wild creatures of sea and shore, by peasants and fishermen, men and women who looked at her with strange eyes and spoke a strange language; whose ways were dark to her, and their thoughts unfathomable. She was face to face not only with primitive human beings, but with the primeval forces of the world—the stern, implacable will of the wind and sea. Not that she could feel these things thus, for they lay beyond the range of her emotions; but at the same time they tortured her. At first it was only by a dull sense of their presence, annihilating her own. Then, because they were things too great for her to grasp, they cruelly flung her back upon herself. They had no revelation for her. But left to herself, bit by bit her own character was revealed to her—not as it had appeared to her before—not even as Wyndham had revealed it to her—but in the nothingness that was its being. It was stripped bare of all that had clothed it, and ruled it, and made it seem beautiful in her eyes. Left to herself, all the influences that had lent color and consistency to this blank, unstable nature had passed out of her life. The men whose destiny she had tried to mold, who had ended by mold-

ing hers, twisting it now into one shape, now into another, had done with it at last; they had flung it from them unshapen as before. There was no permanence even in destiny. Vincent, whose will had dominated her own; Ted, whose boyish passion had touched her heart and made her feel; Langley, whose intellect had kindled hers, and made her able to think—they were all gone, and she was alone. That was Langley's doing—Langley, whom alone of the three she had really loved—ah, she hated him for it now. And hating him, she remembered the many virtues of the two whom she had not loved well. Vincent—that was a revelation of love—why had she shut her eyes to it? Ted, too, poor boy, he might have been hers still if she had chosen. She might have been molding his destiny at this moment—instead of which, his destiny was doubtless molding itself admirably without her.

Then her mood changed. She revolted against the cruelty of her lot. Her sex was the original, the unpardonable injustice. If only she had been a man, she could have taken her life into her own hands, and shaped it according to her will. But woman, even modern woman, is the slave of circumstances and the fool of fate.

"Audrey, Audrey, my dear!" called a wind-blown voice across the sand-hills. Solitude had frightened Miss Craven out of the bungalow, and she was picking her way in and out among the rabbit-holes.

North Devon was hateful to Cousin Bella. She hated the wastes of sand and sea, the discomforts of the bungalow, the slow hours uncertainly measured by meal-times that seemed as if they would never come. Her brain was wild with unsatisfied curiosity. Yet she had tact in the presence of real suffering. She had forbore to question Audrey about the past, and their present life was not fruitful in topics. She did nothing but wonder. "I wonder when it will be tea-time? I wonder if there was anything between Audrey and her cousin? I wonder which of those three gentlemen it was? I wonder when

it will be tea-time?" That was the monotonous rondo of her thoughts to which the sea kept time.

"Audrey, my dear, come in! I think it must be lunch-time," she wailed. But no answer came from the hollow. She meekly turned, and picked her way back again across the sand-hills.

Audrey lay hidden till the forlorn lithe figure was out of sight; then she got up and looked around her. She shuddered. Her life was as bleak as the bleak landscape smitten by the salt wind—cold and gray and formless as the winter sea.

What was that black silhouette on the sands? She strained her eyes to see. Another figure was making its way toward her from the bungalow. When it came near she recognized the unofficial rustic who brought telegrams from the nearest post-town. She waited. The man approached her with an inane smile on his face.

"Telegram vur yū, mizz," he drawled.

She tore open the cover, and read:

Come at once. Vincent dying. Wire what train you come by.

KATHERINE.

She crumpled the paper in her clenched hand. The landscape was blotted out; she saw nothing but the envelope lying at her feet, a dull orange patch against the grayish sand.

"Any awnzur, mizz?"

"No." She shut her eyes and tried to realize it. "Yes—yes, there is! Wait—I must look out my trains first."

She made out that by driving to Barnstaple, and catching the two o'clock train, she would reach Waterloo about eight. She sent the man back with a telegram saying that she would be in Devon Street by nine that evening at the latest.

It was past one then, and she had yet to pack. It was hopeless—she could never catch that train. It did not matter; there was another to Paddington an hour later—it was a slow train, but she would be with Vincent by eleven.

But she was faint, and had to have some luncheon before she could do anything; and there was so much to do.

She flew hither and thither, trying to collect her clothes and her thoughts. Her gray cloak and her bearskins—she would want them, it would be cold in the train. And her best hat—where was her best hat? Cousin Bella had hidden her best hat. Ah! she *must* think, or everything would go wrong. What was it all about? Vincent dying—dying? Audrey knew little about dying, except that it was a habit people had of plunging you suddenly into mourning when you had just ordered a new dress. Death was another of those things she could not understand.

By the time she had had luncheon, and decided what clothes she would take, and packed them; by the time the one old fly in the village had been ordered, and had made its way at a funereal pace to Barnstaple—Audrey was just in time to see the three o'clock train steaming out of the station. By taking the next train and traveling all night, she would only reach Paddington at four in the morning.

As she was at last borne on toward London, lying back on the cushions and trying to sleep, the facts became more clear to her. Vincent was dying; and he had sent for her. She was exalted once more in her own eyes.

It seemed to her then that her love for Vincent had been the one stable and enduring thing in her nature, the link that bound her to a transfigured past, that gave coherence to a life of episodes.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Vincent had been ill for six weeks before Katherine sent off her telegram. For a month of that time he had been struggling with death. Then, when the mild weather set in, he had taken a sudden turn for the better, and it seemed to himself and the Havilands that he had won the victory. Only the doctor and Mrs. Rogers looked grave—the doctor, because of his science, which taught him to be cautious in raising people's hopes; Mrs. Rogers, because of a deep theological pessimism. She unburdened herself to Katherine.

"I knew 'ow it 'ud be when 'e gave up them 'abits of 'is, miss. 'E's been as good as gold for the last year. 'E 'yn't given me no trouble nor anybody; a goin' about so soft, and bilin' of 'is corffee in 'is little Hetna. I said to myself then, 'e's going to be took. It was the same with my pore 'usban', miss."

"Don't talk nonsense, Mrs. Rogers. Mr. Hardy hasn't the least intention of dying; he's getting better as fast as ever he can."

"Oh, miss! don't you sy so! It gives me a turn to 'ear anybody talk so presumptuous. Don't you do it, m'm. If 'e is a little better, it's enuff to make the Almighty tyke 'im, jest to 'ear you, miss."

Katherine forgave Mrs. Rogers, for the affectionate woman had helped to nurse Vincent with a zeal out of all proportion to her knowledge. Katherine had engaged a night-nurse during the crisis of his illness; after that, she and Ted nursed him themselves by turns—one sitting up all night, while the other slept on a bed made up in the sitting-room, to be within call. Katherine learned to know Ted better in those six weeks than in all his life before. The boy seemed to be possessed by a passion of remorse. He was as quiet as Katherine in Vincent's room, and could do anything that had to be done there with the gentleness and devotion of a woman. She would willingly have kept on the trained nurse, in order to give Vincent every advantage in the fight for recovery; but it was impossible.

For all three of them had come to the end of their resources at the same time. The Havilands were in debt at last. Vincent had sunk nearly all his capital in his British Columbian farm, where the agent, in whose integrity he had guilelessly trusted, worked the land for his own benefit, and cheated him out of the returns. His mother had left everything to her second husband. Worse than all was the reprehensible conduct of Sir Theophilus Parker. The old gentleman had died well within the term his nephew had given him, but had made no mention of him in his will,

and "Lavernac and three thousand a year" went to a kinsman of irreproachable morals, but a Radical, and many degrees more distant than Vincent from the blood of a Tory squire.

So, after the struggle with death, came the struggle with poverty. Work was impossible for hands busy with service in the sick-room, and young brains worn out with watching and anxiety. The most expensive luxuries were poor Vincent's necessities; for everything depended now on keeping up his strength.

One morning, after a long night's watching, instead of turning into the next room to sleep, Katherine put on her hat and cloak and went up to the deserted studio. She left the house with the "Witch of Atlas" under her cloak, and carried her to every picture-dealer in Piccadilly and New Bond Street. It was all in vain. Everywhere the "Witch" was pronounced to be beautiful, but unsalable. She was bowed out of every shop-door with polite regret, expressed in one formula: "The demand for this kind of work is really so small that we could only offer you a nominal sum, madam." Finally, Katherine turned into a small shop in Westminster, only to receive the same answer. But this time she was desperate. "What do you call a nominal sum?" The dealer looked the picture up and down; he noted, too, the shabby cloak and worn face of the artist.

"Frame included, five guineas. Not a shilling more, miss."

"I'll take that," she said, almost greedily. And the "Witch" was handed over the counter in exchange for the tenth part of her value.

But five guineas were a mere drop in the ocean of their necessities.

Two days later Katherine set out again, no longer alert and eager, but with a white face, a firm mouth, and a bearing so emphatically resolute that it suggested a previous agony of indecision. She took a bus from Lupus Street to the city. Getting out at Leadenhall Street, she walked on till she came to a building where an arrow painted on the doorway guided her to

the offices of Messrs. Pigott & Co., on the third floor. On and on she went, up the broad stone stairs, with a sick heart and trembling knees, the steepest, weariest climb she had ever made in a life of climbing. When she reached the third floor she almost turned back at the sight of the closed door marked "Private." Then the thought of Vincent lying in his wretched room, a sudden blinding vision of his white face laid back on the pillows, overcame the last rebellion of her pride. She knocked; a well-regulated voice answered: "Who is there?" She brushed her eyelashes with her hand and walked in.

"It's I, uncle."

Mr. Pigott almost started from his seat. "*You*, Katherine? Bless me! Dear me, *dear* me!" He put on his spectacles, and examined her as if she had been some curious animal. And he, too, noticed not only her frayed skirt and the worn edges of the fur about her cloak, but the sharp lines of her face and the black shadows under her eyes.

"Sit down, my dear."

She obeyed, putting her elbow on the office table and resting her head in her hand. She looked defiantly, almost fiercely, before her, and spoke in a cold, hard voice:

"I've come to ask you if you'll lend us some money. We're in debt——"

"In debt? Tt-t-t-tt—that's bad."

"I know it is. But we've had illness in the house, and expenses that we had to meet."

"Bless me! Is the boy ill?"

"No; it's not Ted——" But as she tried to explain who it was she broke down utterly, and burst into tears. Then Uncle James took off his spectacles and wiped them. He waited till she could speak coherently; and when he had heard, he took his check-book out of his drawer, asking no questions and making no comments—for which Katherine respected him.

"How much will clear you, Katherine, and see you to the end of this business?"

"Twenty pounds would clear us; but——"

Uncle James looked very grave, and he wrote with a slow and terrible deliberation. But he smiled lavishly as he handed her a check for a hundred guineas. He had made it guineas.

"Remember, there's plenty more where that came from."

"I—I don't know how to thank you, uncle; we'll repay it gradually, with the interest."

"Interest, indeed; you'll do nothing of the kind. And we won't say anything about repayment, either, this time. Only keep out of debt—keep out of debt, and don't make a fool of yourself, Katherine."

Katherine hesitated, and her voice trembled. "I—I'm not——"

"No, I don't say you are. I ask no questions; and, Katherine!" he looked up, but she was still standing beside him.

"Yes."

"Always come to me at once when you want money; and go to your Aunt Kate when you want advice. She'll help you better than I can, my dear."

"Thank you—thank you very much indeed. You are too good to me." She stooped down and kissed him on the forehead, pressing his hand in hers, and was gone before he could see her tears. Perhaps they would have gratified him. But he was amply rewarded by her kiss and the compliments paid him by his own conscience, which told him that he had not forced his niece's confidence, as he might have done, nor yet chuckled, as he might have done, over her fallen pride. It was a remarkable fulfilment of prophecy, too.

When she got back to Devon Street, Vincent was asleep, with Mrs. Rogers watching over him, and Ted was waiting for her to come to lunch. He looked terribly depressed.

She showed him her check in silence.

"You never asked *him*, that stern old Puritan father?"

"Don't, Ted. Yes, I did. I thought it would kill me; but it didn't. Oh, Ted, we *have* done him an injustice. He was kindness itself. I had to tell him about Vincent, too, and he never

said a word—only gave me the check, and said we weren't to pay it back."

"H'm, that wasn't half bad of him, poor old thing." That admission meant a great deal from Ted.

"There's a letter there for you—from Knowles, I think."

"What's he writing about?" She tore open the envelope. To her intense surprise she found a check for fifty guineas in it, and this note:

DEAR MISS HAVILAND: Forgive my saying so, but, when you want to sell your pictures, why don't you consult your friends instead of going to a thieving dealer? I found the "Witch" in the hands of such an one, and rescued her, for I won't say how little. As I could not possibly keep my ill-gotten gains on any other terms, please accept the enclosed, which with what you probably received will make up something like her real value. I need not tell you how delighted I am to possess so exquisite a specimen of your best work.

"Ted, what am I to do? Send it back again?"

"No, you little fool! Keep it, and never do that again—for any one."

For any one? What was there that she would not do for Vincent? But Ted, having said that, looked more depressed than ever. He went to the fireplace, and leaned against the chimney-piece, shading his face with his hand.

"What is it, Ted?"

He made no answer. A terrible fear clutched at her heart, and he saw it in her eyes.

"He's all right now; he's sleeping. But——"

"But *what*? Tell me, Ted."

"Well, Crashawe was here this morning, and he says he isn't really better."

"But he *is* better. He said so himself when he examined him yesterday."

"Yes, so he is, in a way. That is, you see, his lungs are all right. It's his heart that's bad now. Crashawe says it must always have been more or less weak. And now——" He stopped short.

"Ted——" she implored.

"It may stop beating any minute."

She said nothing; she only took off her hat and cloak and put on her artist's

overall—it was her nurse's apron now. She must go to Vincent. But a thought struck her before she reached the door.

"Does he know?"

"No; but I think he has some idea. He told Crashawe this morning not to interfere with the course of nature." Ted smiled a dreary smile at the recollection.

Katherine dismissed Mrs. Rogers and took up her post at Vincent's bedside. He was still sleeping, with his face turned toward hers as she sat. And as she looked at him she had hope. She was still young, and it was inconceivable to her that anything she loved so much should die. It was not, she pleaded, as if she had been happy, as if her love had any chance of a return, or had asked for anything better than to spend itself like this continually.

And as she sat on watching, it seemed to her that it was better as it was. Better that love should live by immortal things, by things intangible, invisible, by pity, by faith, by hope, breaking little by little every link with earth. She tried to make herself believe this pleasant theory, as she had tried many a day and many a night before, her heart having nothing else to warm it but the fire of its own sacrifice. It was better as it was.

And yet, she said again, in this last six weeks he had been hers in a way in which he could be no other woman's, not even Audrey's. He was hers by her days of service, her nights of watching, by all that had gone before, by her part in his new life. After all, that could never be undone. She was almost happy.

Ted took her place for an hour in the evening, but that was all the rest she gave herself. She meant to sit up with Vincent again to-night.

"Do you know, Kathy, your eyes are very pretty."

It had struck midnight, and Vincent had been awake and looking at her for the last two minutes. She smiled and blushed, and that made her whole face look pretty, too. And as he looked into her eyes the blindness fell from his

own, and he saw as a dying man sometimes does see.

"Come here, sis." He stretched out his arm on the counterpane, and as she knelt beside him he put back her hair from her forehead.

"I wonder if I was wrong when I thought you couldn't love anybody?"

Then she knew that he was dying.

"Yes, very wrong indeed. For—I loved you then, Vincent." Her face was transfigured as she spoke. He had to be spared all sudden emotions, but she knew that *her* confession would do him no harm. And indeed he took it quite calmly, without the least change of pulse.

"I'm not ungrateful——"

"There's nothing to be grateful for. I couldn't help it."

"I would have loved you more, Kathy, if it hadn't been for Audrey."

He spoke without emotion, in the tone of a man stating a simple matter of fact. Then he remarked in the same matter-of-fact voice that, as it happened, he was dying, so it made no difference. Perhaps he wanted her to know that a grave was ready for the secret she had just told him. There was no need to remind her of that—she was sure of it before she spoke.

Her kneeling attitude, and hands outstretched on the counterpane, suggested an order of ideas that had never been very far from him during his illness. For Vincent had been wide-awake and thinking difficult thoughts many a time when he lay with his eyes closed, and Katherine had thought he was asleep.

"I want you to read to me," he said, at last.

"What would you like?"

"Well—the New Testament, I think, if it's all the same to you."

She rose from her knees and looked helplessly round the room. There was a Bible somewhere up-stairs, but——

"You'll find one in the drawer there, where my handkerchiefs are."

She looked, rummaging gently among his poor things. She came on a small muslin pocket-handkerchief, stained with blood, also a loop of black ribbon of the kind that little girls tie

their hair with. Some fine reddish hairs were still tangled in the knot. At last she found a small pocket Testament mixed up with some of his neckties. It was old and worn. Katherine wondered at that, though she could hardly have said why. Then she saw written on the fly-leaf, in a sprawling girl's hand: "Vincent, with Audrey's best love," and a date that went back to their childhood. It was the only present that Audrey had ever made him, and one that had cost her nothing.

"What part shall I read?"

She was afraid that Vincent would lay the burden of choice on her.

But he did not—he had very decided ideas of his own.

"The eighth of Romans, if you don't mind."

An eagle's feather floated out from between the pages at the eighth of Romans. It had been picked up on the snows of the Rocky Mountains. If she had wondered at first, she soon saw why Vincent had chosen that chapter of all others.

"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh."

"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Vincent was dying.

She read on, and as she read she saw behind the edges of the veil that divides the seen from the unseen.

"For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope;

"Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

Her heart beat faster and her breast heaved, but the words lifted her above pathos and tears, and prepared her for the consolation of the close.

"Do you believe all that?" he asked suddenly, when she had finished. She had not expected that.

"I didn't, but I do now."

"Why?" His eyes were fixed on hers, scrutinizing, pathetic.

"Because I *must*."

That reason seemed to be hardly enough for Vincent. He was still hesitating and uncertain, as if he were looking for something that she could not give him. Then he lay back again with his eyes closed.

It was Katherine's turn to think. But Vincent's peace of mind was of more importance to her than the truth or falsehood of a creed. She had realized that there were things that even her love could not do for him. With a sudden flash of recollection she thought of the young priest she had once met at Audrey's house. If any one could help Vincent now, it might be Mr. Flaxman Reed. She was probably mistaken (nobody is very wise between twelve and one in the morning), but at least she could try.

"Vincent," she whispered, "would you like to see a clergyman?"

She smiled, for, after all, it might be the very last thing that he wanted. He smiled, too, a little consciously. His mood had changed for the time being—he had come back again to earth.

"No; thank you, sis. But I should like——"

"What? Tell me."

"To see—Audrey."

The three words gave her a shock, but they told her nothing new.

"You shall. I'll send for her first thing in the morning."

He turned round with his face away from her, and settled himself again to sleep. And Katherine watched. He would be Audrey's to-morrow. He was hers at least for that one night.

No—never, never again. To-morrow had come, and the image of Audrey was between them. It always had been there.

Was it better so?

The next day Audrey had to be found. Ted went to Chelsea Gardens early in the morning, supposing her to be there. The house was shut up, and the caretaker had mislaid her address. He went back to Devon Street. Katherine and Ted were in despair; Vincent alone was equal to the emergency. His mind was on the alert—it had grasped

all the necessary details. He gave them Dean Craven's address, and told Ted to wire to Oxford for Audrey's. That was how Audrey never got the telegram till one o'clock.

That morning the doctor pronounced Vincent decidedly better. The change, he said, was something miraculous. He took Katherine out of the room to tell her so.

"Keep him quiet, and he *may* pull through yet. I don't say he will, but he may. Only—he mustn't have any excitement."

"He's had a great deal this morning. If it lasts all day, and if—he has any more of it to-night, will it hurt him? It's pleasant excitement, you know."

The doctor looked keenly at her. To judge by her white face she was not sharing in the pleasant excitement.

"Well, I can't say. Pleasure does less harm than pain, sometimes. Don't let him have any suspense, though. Suspense will kill him."

But suspense was what he had to bear.

Katherine knew that he was living on in the hope of Audrey's coming. Well, she would be with him by nine at the latest, as she had said.

At half-past eight Vincent began to listen for every bell. At nine he asked to have the door set ajar, that he might hear the wheels of her cab in the street. But though many cabs went by, none stopped.

"She's missed her train. We didn't give her much time. Look out the next, Kathy."

Katherine looked it out. "She'll be here by eleven if she catches the three o'clock. It gets to Paddington at ten."

Vincent closed his eyes and waited patiently till ten. Then he became excited again, the nervous tension increasing with every quarter of an hour. By eleven the street was still, and Vincent strained his ears for every sound. But no sounds were to be heard.

It was half-past eleven. A look of fear had come over his face.

Katherine could bear it no longer. She went into the next room, where Ted was standing at the window. She

laid her hands on his shoulder, clinging to him.

"Oh, Ted, Ted," she whispered fiercely. "She'll kill him. He'll die if she doesn't come. And—she isn't coming."

Ted had never known his sister to do that before. It was horrible, like seeing a man cry. He put his arms round her (he had almost to hold her up), and comforted her as best he could. But she put him from her gently, and went back to her post.

"She'll come to-morrow, Vincent," she said.

"No. If she were coming, she would have wired."

But that was just what Audrey had forgotten to do. By the time she had reached Barnstaple, she was too much taken up with her own tragic importance to think of any small detail of the kind.

Vincent had turned over on his side. He had no more hope, and nothing mattered now. He had done his best, but was not going to carry on a trivial dispute with death.

But though his spirit had given up the struggle, his body still fought on with its own blind will, a long, weary fight that seemed as if it would never end. Toward morning he became to all appearance unconscious.

At seven o'clock the front-door bell rang; there was a stir in the hall and the sound of Mrs. Rogers' voice whispering.

Then the door opened and closed softly. Audrey was standing there, a strange figure in the dim white room, wrapped in her bearskins, and glowing with life and the fresh morning air.

At first she could distinguish nothing in the shaded light. Then she made out Ted, sitting with his back to her at the foot of the bed, and Katherine standing at the head of it. But when she saw the motionless figure raised by pillows, and vaguely defined under the disordered bedclothes, a terror seized her, and she hid her face in her hands.

"Come here, Audrey," said Katherine gently. And she came—gliding, trembling, as she had come to him that

afternoon at Chelsea, a year and a half ago. But she kept her eyes fixed on Katherine. She was afraid to look *there*.

"Take his hand. Speak to him."

Audrey looked round, but Ted had left the room. Her small white hand slid out of her muff, warm with the warm fur, and rested on Vincent's hand; but no words came. She was sick with fear.

The touch was enough. Warm and caressing, the little fingers curled into the hollow of his hand, and Vincent woke from his stupor. He opened his eyes, but their look was vague and wondering; he was not conscious yet. Katherine moved aside and drew up the blind, and the faint daylight fell on Audrey's face, as her eyes still followed Katherine.

For one instant his brain seemed to fill suddenly with light. It streamed from his brain into the room, and he saw her standing in the midst of it.

"Audrey!" The loud, hoarse voice startled Katherine, and made Audrey shake with fright. His hand closed tightly on hers, and he sank back into unconsciousness.

For two hours the two women kept watch together by his bed—Katherine at the head, holding Vincent in her strong arms; Audrey sitting at the foot with her back turned to him, pressing her handkerchief to her mouth. At nine o'clock she shivered and looked round, as Vincent's head sank forward on his breast.

Katherine, standing at the back of the bed, first saw what had happened by the change on Audrey's face. The corners of her mouth had suddenly straightened, and she started up, white and rigid.

"He's dead! Take me away, Katherine—take me away!"

But this time Katherine neither saw nor heard her.

"No; he was bound to die. What else could you expect after the life he led, poor fellow?"

It was all over. Audrey had dragged herself out of the room, she scarcely

knew how—dragged herself up to Katherine's room and thrown herself on the bed in a passion of weeping; and Katherine, kneeling for the second time by Vincent's side, could hear the verdict of science through the half-open door. Doctor Crashawe was talking to Ted.

Neither Audrey nor Katherine knew how they got through the next three days. Audrey was afraid to sleep alone, and Katherine had her with her night and day. Audrey would have gone back to Chelsea but for her fear, and for a feeling that to leave Devon Street would be a miserable abandonment of a great situation. All those three days Katherine was tender to her for Vincent's sake. Happily for her, Audrey disliked going into his room; she was afraid of the long figure under the straight white sheet. Katherine could keep her watch with him again alone; she had no rival there.

Once indeed they stood by his bed together, when Katherine drew back the sheet from his face, and Audrey laid above his heart a wreath of eucharis lilies, the symbol of purity.

They stood beside him, the woman who loved him and the woman he had loved; and they envied him, one the peace, the other the glory, of death.

CHAPTER XXV.

It was early one morning about a week after the funeral. Hardy had gone to his grave, followed last by his friends, and first by his next of kin, Audrey, and the man who had Lavernac. Audrey was still (as she always had been) his affectionate cousin. The fact was expressly stated on the visiting-card attached to the flowers where-with she had covered his coffin.

It was in Katherine's bedroom. Katherine was still in bed, waiting for Audrey to be dressed before her. Audrey was sitting at the dressing-table brushing her hair, twisting it into the big coil that shone like copper on the surface, with a dull, dark red at the heart of it. She had on Katherine's white dressing-gown and Katherine's

slippers. She had laughed when she put them on, they were so ridiculously large for her tiny feet.

Audrey was rebounding after the pressure that had been put on her during the last ten days. The weight was lifted now. After all, she had not felt herself an important actor in that drama of death. Death himself had come and waived her coldly aside. She had been nothing in that household filled with his presence. Here again she had been overpowered by one of those unseen, incomprehensible things that she could not grasp, but that crushed her and made her of no account. At times, in her misery, she had even felt a vague, faint jealousy of the dead. But since the day of the funeral her supple nature had unbent. She could talk now, and she talked incessantly, generally about Vincent.

She had begun by monopolizing his memory, making it a sacred possession of her own, till not even that consolation was left to Katherine. Audrey stood between her and every scene connected in her mind with Vincent; the figure of Audrey seemed to draw nearer and grow larger, until it covered everything else. Her stream of talk was blotting out the impressions that Katherine most longed to keep, giving to the past a transient character of its own. She was killing remembrance; and there came upon Katherine a fear of the forgetfulness where all things end.

And now, as she lay there watching Audrey, she recalled the truth that she had lost sight of since Vincent's death—the truth that he had told her. He would have loved her—if it had not been for Audrey. She had begun to realize the intensity of the duel which had been between Audrey and her from the first.

It had begun in the days when Audrey had stood in the way of Ted's career; it had gone on afterward, when it was to be feared that she had done him still more grievous harm; and it had ended in separating Katherine from Vincent, and even from his memory. Rather, that duel had neither beginning nor end. There was something

foregone and inevitable about it, something that had its roots deep down in their opposite natures. It had to be. It had been from the hour when she first met Audrey until now, when the two women were again thrown together in a detestable mockery of friendship, forced into each other's arms, lying by each other's side.

Audrey had been quiet for some time, and Katherine was nervously wondering when she would begin.

"Katherine," she said, at last, "I want you to come back with me to Chelsea to-day." The fact was, Miss Craven was in Devonshire, and Audrey was still afraid to be in the house by herself.

"I couldn't possibly. I can't leave Ted."

"That doesn't matter. Ted can come, too."

What *was* Audrey's mind like? Had it no memory?

"I think not, Audrey."

Audrey said no more. She gave the last touches to her hair, put on her black dress, and turned herself slowly round before the looking-glass. She was satisfied with the result.

It was her last day in Devon Street, so the Havilands had to be nice to her. Ted went out soon after breakfast; he was incapable of any sustained effort. Audrey did not know it, but the boy hated the house now that she was in it. Katherine had dreaded being left alone with her that morning. She knew that last words would come. And they came.

They were sitting together by the studio fire, talking about indifferent subjects, when suddenly Audrey left her seat and knelt down by Katherine's knees in an attitude of confession.

"Katherine," she began, and her gray eyes filled with tears, "before I go, I want to tell you something——"

"What is it?"

"I want you to know that I really loved Vincent all the time."

She waited to see the effect of her words, but Katherine set her teeth firmly and said nothing. Audrey went on, still kneeling: "I don't know what made me get engaged to Ted—I liked

him, you know, dear boy, but—I think it was because Vincent would not understand me; and he wanted to hurry things so. And, you see, I didn't know then how much I loved him. Then afterward——" She stopped; she had come to the difficult part of her confession.

"Well?"

"Then you see, I knew Mr. Wyndham, and he——" Another pause.

"What did Mr. Wyndham do?" It was better that she should talk about Mr. Wyndham than about Vincent.

"I don't know what he did, but he made me mad; he made me think I cared for him. He was so clever. You know I always adored clever people; and, well—nobody could call poor Vincent clever—*could* they?"

In spite of herself, Katherine's lip curled with scorn. But Audrey was too much absorbed in her confession to see it.

"I suppose that fascinated me. Then afterward when Vincent took to those dreadful ways—whatever my feelings were, you *know*, Katherine, it was impossible."

Katherine could bear it no longer, but she managed to control her voice in answering. "Why do you tell me these things? Do you suppose I care to hear about your 'feelings'?—if you do feel."

"If I *do* feel? Kathy!"

"Well, why can't you keep quiet, now it's too late?"

"Because—because I wanted you to know that I loved him."

There was silence. Presently Audrey put one hand on Katherine's knee.

"Kathy——"

"I'd rather you didn't call me that, if you don't mind."

"Why?" Audrey stared with large, incomprehensible eyes.

"I can't tell you why."

"Katherine, then—it is prettier. Do you know, I sometimes think it's better that he should have died."

Katherine rose from her seat, to end it, looking down on the kneeling figure, as she answered bitterly:

"It was indeed—ininitely better."

But irony, like so many other things of the kind, was beyond Audrey.

"I suppose I ought to go now," she said, rising. Katherine made no answer.

Audrey went away to get ready, a little reluctantly, for she had so much more to say. It had never occurred to her to be jealous of Katherine. That may have been either because she did not know, or because she did not care. She had been so sure of Vincent.

Presently she came back with her hat on. She carried her bearskins in her hand, and under the shade of the broad, black beaver her face wore an expression of anxious thought.

"Katherine"—she held out her cape and muff, and Katherine remembered that they were those which Vincent had given her—"I suppose I can wear my furs still, even if I *am* in mourning?"

There was neither scorn nor irony in the look that Katherine turned on her, and Audrey understood this time. As plainly as looks can speak, it condemned her as altogether lighter than vanity itself; and while condemning, it forgave her.

"He gave them to me, you know," she said, at last. Audrey's pathos generally came too late.

She drove away, wrapped in her furs, and for once unconscious of her own beauty, so dissatisfied was she with the part she had played in the great tragedy. Somehow her parts seemed always to dwindle this way in retrospect.

That afternoon a parcel arrived, addressed to Hardy by his publishers. Katherine opened it. It contained early copies of the pioneer book, the book that, after all, Vincent was never to see.

She saw with a pang her own design blazing in gold on the cover, and her frontispiece sketch of the author. Then she turned to the dedication page, and read:

TO HER
WHO HAS INSPIRED
ALL THAT THERE MAY BE OF GOOD IN IT
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED
BY HER AFFECTIONATE COUSIN,
VINCENT HARDY.

It was an epitaph.

CHAPTER XXVI.

One day's work among the poor of St. Teresa's, Lambeth, is enough to exhaust you, if you are at all sensitive and highly strung, and Audrey had had three days of it. No wonder, then, that as she leaned back in a particularly hard wooden chair in the vicar's study every nerve in her body was on edge.

It was a year after Vincent's death. With lapse of time that event had lost much of its oppressive magnificence, and it affected Audrey more in looking back than it had done in reality. Time, too, had thrown her relations with Wyndham into relief; and, as she realized more and more their true nature, the conscience that had been so long quiescent began to stir in her. Its voice seemed to be seconding Wyndham's and Katherine's verdict. She became uneasy about herself. Once more, this time in serious sincerity, she felt the need of a stronger personality upholding and pervading her own. Absolute dependence on somebody's else character had become a habit of her nature—she could no more live now without some burning stimulus to thought and feeling than the drunkard can satisfy his thirst with plain water. Naturally, she thought of Mr. Flaxman Reed, as Katherine had thought of him the midnight before Vincent's death, or as she had thought of him herself in the day of her temptation. This time she had ended by going to him, as many a woman had gone before, with her empty life in her hands, begging that it might be filled. For all cases of the kind Mr. Flaxman Reed had one remedy—work in the parish of St. Teresa's; as a rule, it either killed or cured them. But he had spared Audrey hitherto, as he would have spared some sick child a medicine too strong and bitter for it. Finally, much to his surprise, she asked him for the work of her own accord, and he gave it to her.

And now she had had three days of it. It was enough. It made her head ache yet to think of all she had gone through. For the first two days she had been sustained by a new and wholly delightful

sensation, the consciousness of her own goodness; on the third day that support had suddenly given away. A woman's coarse word, the way a man had looked at her as she lifted her silk petticoats out of the mud, some bit of crude criticism such as Demos publishes at street corners in the expressive vernacular, had been sufficient to destroy all the bright illusions that gilded the gutters of Lambeth, reflections of a day that was not hers. And yet, she had come into a new world with new ideas and new emotions; if not the best of all possible worlds, it was better than any which had once seemed probable, and she wanted to stay in it. She was dazzled by the splendor of religion. The curtain had risen on the great miracle-play of the soul; she, too, longed to dance in the mask of the virtues and the graces. Every fresh phase of life had presented itself to Audrey in spectacular magnificence; she could not help seeing things so, it was the way her mind worked. The candles burning on the high altar of St. Teresa's were only footlights in the wrong place; and the veil that Mr. Flaxman Reed had lifted a little for her was the curtain going up before another stage. Meanwhile she had to consider his possible criticism of her own acting. Sitting in the hard, ascetic chair, she looked round the room and tried to understand a little of its owner's life. Every detail in it was a challenge to her intelligence. She perplexed herself with questions. Why didn't Mr. Flaxman Reed have a proper carpet on the floor? Why didn't he hang a curtain over that ugly green baize door? It led into the room where he held his classes and entertained his poorer parishioners; that room was also his dining-room. How could he eat his meals after all those dreadful people had been in it, poor things? Why only common deal bookcases, a varnished desk, and that little painted table underneath the big crucifix? Why these painfully uneasy chairs, and—yes—only one picture, and that of the most emaciated of Madonnas? Could not her old favorite, Botticelli, have supplied him with a lovelier type? Or there was

Raphael. Sometimes, on a Sunday evening, after service, she had come in here from the rich, warm, scented church, with the music of an august liturgy ringing in her ears, and the chill place had struck like death to all her senses. And this was the atmosphere in which his life was spent—this, and the gaunt streets and the terrible slums of Lambeth.

She was not left long alone, for Mr. Flaxman Reed never kept any one waiting if he could help it. As he seated himself opposite to her, the set lines of his face relaxed and his manner softened. Her eyes followed the outline of his face, which stood out white and sharp against the dark window-curtain. She noted the crossed legs, the hands folded on his knees, the weary pose of the whole wasted figure. It ought to have been an appeal to her pity. The poor man was suffering from many kinds of hunger, and from intense exhaustion. He had just dismissed a tiresome parishioner, and, vexed with himself for having kept Audrey waiting, had left his dinner in the next room untouched, and came all unnerved to this interview which he dreaded yet desired. He listened quietly to the story of her failure; it was not only what he had expected, but what he had wished.

"It's no good my trying any more," she urged, in the pleading voice that she could make so sweet. "I can't do anything. The sight of those poor wretches' misery only makes me miserable, too. I dream of it at night. I assure you it's been the most awful three days I ever spent in my life."

"Has it?"

"Yes. I feel things so terribly, you know; and it's not as if I could do anything—I simply can't. What *must* you think of me?"

"I think nothing. I knew that you would tell me this, and I am glad."

"Are you? Glad that I failed?"

"Yes; glad and thankful." He paused; his thin, sensitive lips trembled, and when he spoke again it was in a low, constrained voice, as if he were struggling with some powerful feeling.

"I wanted you to learn by failure that

it is not what we know, nor what we do, but what we *are* that matters in the sight of God."

"Yes, I know that." She sat looking up, with her head a little on one side, holding her chin in one hand—it had been her attitude in her student days at Oxford when trying to follow a difficult lecture, and she reverted to it now. For Mr. Flaxman Reed was very difficult. His style fascinated and yet repelled her, and in this case the style was the man.

"What am I?" said Audrey presently. It was a curious question, and none of her friends had answered it to her satisfaction. She was eager to know Mr. Reed's opinion. He turned and looked at her, and his eyes were two clear lights under the shadow of the sharp eye-bone.

"What are you? With all your faults and all your failures, you are something infinitely more valuable than you know."

"What makes you say so?"

"I say so because I think that God cares more for those that hunger and thirst after righteousness than for those who are filled at His table. Believe me, nothing in all our intercourse has touched me so much as this confession of your failure."

"Has it really? Can you—can you trust me again in spite of it?"

"Yes; you have trusted me. I take it as one of the greatest pleasures, the greatest privileges of my life, that you should have come to me as you have done—not when you were bright and happy, but in your weakness and distress, in what I imagine to have been the darkest hour of all, when refuge failed you, and no man cared for your soul."

"No; that's the worst of it—that there's nobody to turn to—nobody cares. If I thought that you cared—but—"

"Indeed I care."

"For my soul—yes." Her "yes" was a deep sigh.

"Why not? It is my office. A priest is answerable to God for the souls of his people."

He spoke with a touch of austerity in his tone. Something warned him that if this conversation was to be profitable to either of them, he must avoid personalities. His position in the church was a compromise. His attitude toward Audrey Craven was only another kind of compromise—so much concession to her weakness, so much to her appealing womanhood. He had begun by believing in her soul—that was the plea he made to the fierce exacting conscience, always requiring a spiritual motive for his simplest actions—and he had ended by creating the thing he believed in, and in his own language he was answerable to God for it. But hitherto with his own nature he had made no compromise. He had sacrificed heart, senses, and intellect to the tyranny of his conscience; he had ceased to dread their insane revolt against that benevolent despotism. And now the question that tormented him was whether all the time he had not been temporizing with his own inexorable humanity, whether his relations with Audrey Craven did not involve a perpetual intrigue between the earthly and the heavenly. For there was a strange discrepancy between his simple heart that took all things seriously—even a frivolous woman—and the tortuous, entangled thing that was his conscience. He went on at first in the same self-controlled voice, monotonous but for a peculiar throbbing stress on some words, and he seemed to be speaking more to himself than her.

"You say you can do nothing, and I believe it. What of that? The things that are seen are temporal, the things that are unseen are eternal. Our deeds are of the things that are seen; they are part of the visible finite world, done with our hands, with our body. They belong to the flesh that profiteth nothing. It is only the spirit, only the pure and holy will, that gives them life. That will is not ours—not yours or mine. Before we can receive it our will must die; otherwise there would be two wills in us struggling for possession. You have come to me for help—after all, I can give you none. I can

only tell you what I know—that there is no way of peace but the way of renunciation. I can only say: if your will is not yet one with God's will, renounce it—give it up. Then and then only you will live—not before. Look there!" he pointed to the crucifix. "The great pagan religions had each their symbol of life. For us who are Christ's the symbol of life is the crucifix. Crucify self. When you have done that, you will have no need to come and ask me what you must do and what you must leave undone. Your deeds are—they *must* be pure."

His excitement moved her, her eyes filled with tears; but she followed his words slowly and painfully. He was always making these speeches to her, full of the things she could not understand. How often she had felt this sense of effort and pain in the old "art" days with Ted, or when she had been held helpless in the grasp of Wyndham's relentless intellect. She had chafed when the barriers rose between her mind and theirs. But between her and this nineteenth-century ascetic there was an immeasurable gulf fixed; she could not reach the hand he stretched out to her across it. Even his living presence seemed endlessly far from hers, and the thought of that separation filled her with a deep, resigned humility. Now, though his thoughts were poured into her consciousness without mixing with it, cloudy, insoluble, troubling its blank transparency, something in the rhythmic movement of his words stirred her, so responsive was she to every impression of sense. They recalled to her that other gospel of life preached to her by Langley, and, though she understood imperfectly, she felt the difference with shame. The young priest went on, still as if speaking to himself:

"There are only two things we have to learn—the knowledge of self and the knowledge of God, and they hang together. If there is any sin in us, unconfessed and unrecognized as sin, there is no knowledge of God and no union with Him possible for us."

She rose, moved a step forward, and

then stood looking at him irresolutely. Truly a revelation was there for her; but she was in that state of excitement in which we are more capable of making revelations than of receiving them. He had risen, too, and was holding out his hand. "Well," he said more gently, "there is something you want to say to me. Please sit down again."

She shook her head and still stood upright. Possessed with the thought of the confession she was about to make, she felt that she needed all the dignity that attitude afforded. At last she spoke, very low and quickly, keeping her eyes fixed on the floor.

"You say you know me, but you don't. You don't know what I am—what I am capable of. But I must tell you—the thought of it is stifling me. Once, only two years ago, I had a terrible temptation. It came to me through some one whom I loved—very dearly. I was ready to give up everything—*everything*, you understand—for him; and I would have done it, only—God was good to me. He made it impossible for me, and I was saved. But I am just as bad, just as guilty, as if He had let it happen."

It was done. The unutterable thing was said. For once Audrey had been absolutely truthful and sincere. The soul that he had evoked had come forth new-born out of the darkness.

At first neither of them spoke. Then he sat down and thanked her, simply, for what she had just told him. But to his own shame and grief he had nothing more to say. He had heard many a confession, and from many a guiltier woman's lips, but none so piteous, because none so purely spontaneous, as this. And to all he had given pity, counsel, and help.

But now he was dumb.

She was thirsting for help, for help that she could understand. She clasped her hands imploringly and looked into his face, but it had no pity for her and no deliverance. She could see nothing there but grief—grief terrible and profound.

"I see. Then you, too, judge me—like the rest."

"God forbid. I judge no man." Which was true, for it was the woman he had judged.

She looked at him again, a long look full of wonder and reproach; then she went quietly away.

She had reached the end of the narrow passage leading from the study to the front hall, when she recollected that she had left behind her a small manual of devotion. He had given it to her not long ago. She went back for it, and knocked softly at the study door. There was no answer, and, supposing that he had gone through into the room beyond, she opened the door and looked in.

He was kneeling in the far corner of the study, with his hands stretched out before the crucifix. From the threshold where she stood she could see the agony of his uplifted face and hear his prayer. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Audrey knew then that for one moment the love she had hungered and thirsted after, more than after righteousness, had been actually within her grasp, and that she had lost it. The shadow of an uncommitted sin stood between her and the one man by whom and for whom she could have grown pure and womanly and good. For Flaxman Reed had loved her, though up to that evening he had been in complete ignorance of the fact, being already wedded to what the world considers an impossible ideal.

Such is the power of suggestion, that Audrey's confession of her weakness had revealed to him his own. If she had been all that he believed her to be, he might not have regarded his feeling for her as in itself of the nature of sin; but his sensitive soul, made morbid by its self-imposed asceticism, recoiled from the very thought of impurity in the woman he loved. Hence his powerlessness to help her. He knew, none better, that a stronger man would not have felt this difficulty. He had trembled before his own intellect; now he was afraid of his own heart.

Audrey—it was for such that his

Christ had died. And he could not even speak a word to save her.

He became almost blasphemous in his agony. Christ had died on *His* cross. He, Christ's servant, had crucified self—and it could not die. Was this the ironic destiny of all ideals too austere for earth, too divine for humanity?

Not long afterward Flaxman Reed was received into the communion of the Church of Rome. He had done with compromise.

CHAPTER XXVII.

It was Audrey's fate to be condemned by those whom she had most cared for. Ted and Vincent, Langley and Katherine, and, lastly, Mr. Flaxman Reed, they had all judged her—harshly, imperfectly, as human nature judges. Of the five, perhaps Vincent, because he was a child of nature, and Katherine, because she was a good woman, alone appreciated the more pathetic of Audrey's effects. She presented the moving spectacle of a small creature struggling with things too great for her. Love, art, nature, religion, she had never really given herself up to any one of them; but she had called upon them all in turn, and, instead of sustaining, they had overwhelmed her.

And it seemed that Mr. Flaxman Reed, as the minister of the religion in which she had sought shelter for a day, had failed her the most unexpectedly, and in her direst necessity. And yet he had done more for her than any of the others. She had lied to all of them; he had made it possible for her to be true. Flaxman Reed would certainly not have called himself a psychological realist; but by reason of his one strength, his habit of constant communion with the unseen, he had solved Langley Wyndham's problem. It would never have occurred to the great novelist, in his search for the real Audrey, to look deeper than the "primitive passions," or to suspect that the secret of personality could lie in so pure a piece of mechanism as the human conscience.

Soon after her confession, Audrey left town for the neighborhood of Oxford. She may have perceived that London was too vast a stage for her slender performances; or she may have had some idea of following up a line slanting gently between the two paths pointed out to her by Langley Wyndham and Flaxman Reed, who had been the strongest forces in her life. She had come to herself, but she was not the stuff of which renunciants are made.

It was about three years later that Mr. Langley Wyndham, looking over his *Times* one morning, had the joy of reading the announcement of Miss Audrey Craven's marriage with Algernon Jackson, Esq., of Broughton Poggs, in the County of Oxfordshire.

It was true. After all, Audrey had married a nonentity—it was the end of her long quest of the eminent and superlative.

Mr. Jackson was certainly not an eminent person, and he was superlative only in so far as he passed for "the biggest bore in the county"; but he had the positive merit of being a gentleman, which in these days of a talented democracy amounts almost to genius. Since that night when, as a guileless undergraduate, he had interfered with Audrey's first introduction to Langley Wyndham, Mr. Jackson's career had been simplicity itself. He had tried most of the learned professions, and failed in all he tried. He then took up model goose-farming on a large scale, and achieved success amid the jeers of his family and friends. The echo of that derision was soon lost in the jingle of Algernon's guineas. Not every one can attain a golden mediocrity; and it was a great step for a man who had hitherto ranked as a nonentity. On the strength of it he asked the beautiful Miss Craven to be his wife, and no one was more surprised than himself when she consented. She was his first and last love—of a series of loves.

Nobody ever understood why Audrey made that marriage. For any one who

had enjoyed the friendship of such men as Langley Wyndham and Flaxman Reed, there was pathos in the step; it seemed an ugly concession to actuality. It may have been; for Audrey was nothing if not modern, the daughter of an age that has flirted with half a dozen ideals, all equally fascinating, and finally decided in favor of a mature realism. She may have learned that hardest lesson of the schools, the translation of life's drama from fancy into fact; found out that all the time the gray old chorus has been singing, not of love and joy, as she once in her ignorance imagined, but of unspeakable rest on the great consoling platitudes of life, where there is no more revelation because there is no mystery, and no despair because there is no hope. The text of that chorus is often corrupt, but the meaning is never hopelessly obscure. In other words, she may have married Mr. Jackson in a fit of pessimism.

Or perhaps—perhaps she had profited by the more cheerful though equally important lesson of the playground; learned that whether the game of life be fast or slow, dull or amusing, matters little when you are knocked out in the first round (she herself had had many rounds, not counting Mr. Jackson); that in these circumstances one may still find considerable entertainment in looking on; and that in any case the player is not for the game, but the game for the player. The player—who may be left on the ground long after all games have been played out. But this is to suppose that Audrey was a philosopher, which is manifestly absurd.

Perhaps! More likely than not her revelation came when she was least looking for it, stumbling by the merest accident on one of "the great things of life," the eternal, the incomprehensible; for of these some say that the greatest is love. It is certainly the most incomprehensible. She may have loved Mr. Jackson. If she did not, she has never let him know it.

THE REST *of a* STORMY PETREL



RS. LORING was the eldest of the sisters who were known as "The Three Graces" when they were introduced to society, and time had dealt so leniently with her that,

after a married life of twenty years and a widowhood of ten, she was still a strikingly handsome woman. Married when a young girl to a man whose name is writ large upon his country's history, her great beauty and charming personality had helped to make their house—whether situated in Washington, where Loring served both in the Senate and Cabinet, or in the European capitals where he represented his government at foreign courts—a gathering-place for all that was most brilliant and attractive. The marriages of the other members of that beautiful trinity—Helen to Prince Michael Petrofsky, a member of the czar's household, and Josephine to Count de Lorimer, a Frenchman high in the diplomatic service of the republic—served to keep Mrs. Loring in touch with the affairs of the great world after her husband's death, and she retained as friends the acquaintances she had made as a result of his official position.

She was an ever welcome visitor in Mayfair, the Faubourg St. Germain, and even in that most exclusive of royal circles which surrounds the Hofburg in Vienna; and no foreigner of distinction, if by any rare chance he had not met her abroad, was considered to be properly accredited socially if he did not bear letters of introduction to this

charming lady when coming to America.

With such a varied acquaintance, it was natural that the guests who enjoyed the hospitality of her beautiful American country place should differ from ordinary house-parties, but it was an unusually mixed assemblage for whom she poured tea this October afternoon in the great drawing-room, lighted in the early dusk only by the blazing logs in the broad fireplace; a group composed of so many nationalities that general conversation would have been possible only in the lingua Franca of diplomacy and cosmopolitan society.

Von Ebbstein, secretary of embassy—straight-backed, square-shouldered, and wearing a heavy mustache trained upward until its waxed ends nearly met the shaggy eyebrows shadowing the deep-set, sharp eyes which saw so much and revealed so little—tried to follow the quick rattle of little Mrs. Bobby Edwards' convent French as she told a story which assuredly she had not learned from the good sisters of the Sacred Heart. Mrs. Jack Musgrave, in riding-habit and boots, drank her tea perched on the arm of a large chair; the bright color which she had brought in from her gallop in the sharp autumn air heightening under the incessant stream of compliments which De la Vergne, the great French portrait-painter, murmured into her ear.

The respective husbands of the two young women, clear-skinned, cleanly built specimens of young America, discussed the previous day's run in the jargon of the hunting-field with Little-

ton, the English hunter and explorer; and Count Caravelli, the sculptor, penniless scion of an ancient family which had done much to make Florence beautiful in centuries past, carried a cup of tea to a woman who lounged in a deep chair before the fire, screening her face from the blaze with a copy of the *Spectator*. She thanked him in his own language without a trace of accent, and in equally faultless English asked her hostess for another slice of lemon.

"You won't shock me if you ask for something else in it," said Mrs. Loring, as Caravelli brought the cup back. "Vodka I can't offer you, but do try some of this rum, Madame Streloff."

"Could anything which any one could say or do shock you, Aunt Emily?" asked Nelly Edwards demurely; and Von Ebbstein, taking advantage of her entrance into general conversation, made a mental note under the head of "Topics of Conversation of Young American Matrons," for the "Recollections of a Diplomat," with which he intended to occupy his declining years.

"Fortunately for our continued friendship, I am tolerant of everything but a bore, fairest and naughtiest of nieces," replied Mrs. Loring, smiling at her as she added the rum to Madame Streloff's tea.

"Then I suppose the new man who is coming on the evening train is interesting?" said Nelly irrelevantly, not in the least put out by her aunt's allusion to her indiscreet tongue. "Who is he, or what is he, Aunt Emily?"

"Don't get excited about him, Nelly," answered Mrs. Loring, laughing. "He's too old a worldling to be a subject for your 'First Aid to the Innocent' ministrations. Your questions have been asked by many people in different parts of the world during the last dozen years, and I can answer only one of them. He is a very old friend of mine named Ralston Phillips; the answer to the other you will have to find for yourself—if you can."

"I vonce knew a man of dot name—an Englishman," said Von Ebbstein, whose tongue absolutely refused to recognize the sound of 'w' or 'th' in the

English language. "He vas in Shimonoscki ven de dreaty vas signed."

"Yes, I remember that he was in Japan at that time, so he will probably prove to be an old acquaintance of yours, baron; but you are mistaken as to his nationality. He isn't one of the aggressive variety, but I can assure you that he is a thorough American," answered Mrs. Loring.

"So!" exclaimed the German thoughtfully; and he made another note upon his mental tablets—one which elucidated many things which had puzzled him since that assemblage of plenipotentiaries.

"I met a man named Ralston Phillips in Hayana, just at the end of Weyler's administration," chimed in Martinez, a young Cuban whose father had gasped out his life at the foot of the execution wall in Cabañas fortress before the American intervention.

"Then you, too, will meet an old friend," replied Mrs. Loring. "He has been in many places where things were happening—events which go to the making of history—and wherever the storm-center of international affairs happens to be, he is always apparently idling. He seems to have such an unerring faculty for being in the middle of it all, that I always call him the Stormy Petrel."

"And what sort of a cyclone is going to hit this peaceful community that he is attracted to it?" asked Helen Musgrave, glad to enter into the conversation to escape from the attentions of De la Vergne, which were becoming too insistent. "Nothing ever happens here."

"Indeed, things do happen here!" exclaimed Nelly Edwards. "Why, last year we had the Chatham divorce case, and the year before, that beastly little cad, Westly, ran away with the governess."

Mrs. Loring laughingly protested.

"He isn't interested in that kind of trouble, and I can assure you that his coming does not presage domestic infelicity to either of you young women," she said. "He is coming up here to rest, for even stormy petrels appreciate

calm weather occasionally, and he has had a long stay in troubled waters. Helen writes me that he has been in Russia for several months."

Madame Streloff straightened up in her chair and became suddenly attentive, and a tall, handsome man, who had been sitting quietly in one of the dark corners, rose and joined the group about the tea-table.

"Your friend comes direct from Russia, Mrs. Loring?" he asked.

"I imagine so; it is an old compact of ours that he looks me up directly when he reaches America, and he can't have been here many days," she answered. "Is he an acquaintance of yours also, Mr. Streloff?"

"No," said Streloff, shaking his head. "I never heard his name until you mentioned it, but we are naturally interested in any one who may be able to give us authentic news of the happenings in our distressed country. You know that the information which the censor allows to pass is not always satisfying nor reliable."

"And how much of what is really happening do you think a foreigner would be permitted to hear about or see?" asked Madame Streloff, as she rose and stood in front of the fire, her tall, slender figure outlined by the light, her face in the shadow. "Just exactly as much as the officials desire that he should know and not a particle more."

Mrs. Loring looked at her with a twinkle of amusement in her eyes.

"It is evident that you don't know my Stormy Petrel," she said dryly. "He has a wonderful faculty for acquiring information, and I'll wager that few subjects of the czar know more than he about what has happened during his stay there."

"If he had information which would be dangerous, the chances are that he would be sequestered in a dungeon of St. Peter and St. Paul, to tell it to stone walls," answered Madame Streloff indifferently, but Von Ebbstein, who had been quietly watching the Russians from under his shaggy eyebrows, made another entry upon his mental tablets.

She was a curious-looking woman,

this Madame Streloff, and one whose face would not easily be forgotten. Her features were classical in their regularity, her skin almost alabaster in clearness and lack of color; the pallor accentuated by the vivid red of her lips. Her sensitive mouth rarely smiled, and when it did, seemed but to add to the sadness of her face, but it was her eyes which impressed one. Von Ebbstein, close student of human nature that he was, acknowledged to himself that they puzzled him. A diplomat trained in the old school, which has for one of its axioms that "language is a gift bestowed upon man to enable him to conceal his thoughts," he depended more upon the involuntary revelations of unconscious movements of the fingers, twitching of the lips, and, above all, the expressions of the eyes, than upon words, which he instinctively distrusted, to tell him what was really passing in another's mind.

"Sorrows she has had, disappointments she has known—but in what?" he asked himself, as he looked at her eyes when she thought herself unobserved, and saw them change in color and expression under the influence of her own thoughts, to which he had no clue. In conversation with him they were a mask behind which he had never been able to peer, but he knew that they would be well worth watching if she were stirred by one of the great elemental passions, and she was rarely free from his furtive observation when they were in the same room. No man or woman whom he met was without interest to Von Ebbstein, and he carefully catalogued them in his mind with true Teutonic system, but this lady—beautiful of face, tall and graceful of figure, indolent of manner, indifferent to flattery, and apparently without emotions—was as yet undocketed in that mental cabinet which contained the private histories of hundreds of people who had sailed with him on the deep waters of international politics.

The arrival of Ralston Phillips was awaited with an unusual amount of interest. A new man always offered possibilities for harmless flirtation to Nelly

Edwards, who was an enthusiastic and successful collector and trainer of "tame cats"; Von Ebbstein wished to set at rest several questions which had troubled him since he learned of his mistake as to his nationality; the Streloffs regarded him as a possible bearer of news, and the curiosity of the others was aroused by the hint of mystery which Mrs. Loring had conveyed as to his occupation in life. When he came he was a distinct disappointment to the younger members of the party, for, with a traveler's appetite, he devoted himself to the well supplied tea-table, after he had acknowledged the introductions to him.

"I have all sorts of messages from the princess for you; a budget of gossip in my memory, and a package in my luggage from Countess de Lorimer. I dined with them the one night I was in Paris," he said to Mrs. Loring, as she poured his tea.

"And a lot of interesting things to tell me about your own experiences, as well, I trust," she answered. "I know that you can't have been altogether idle in Russia."

"I? Oh, I am always idle, you know. An interest in what goes on about me—yes, if it is worth while, which it usually isn't, but nothing more."

"I wonder if the archives of the chancelleries and the state department wouldn't disprove that statement," said Mrs. Loring, in a low tone; and Phillips shook his head and laughed.

"My dear friend, you are always looking for motives for my madness, and trying to believe that I am really a useful member of society. I am no contributor to archives, but I'll confide a secret to you if you will not betray me." Mrs. Loring inclined her head toward him; and Phillips, his eyes twinkling with mischief, whispered: "I couldn't be; my early education was neglected, and I can't spell."

"You shall have no more tea, to punish you for aggravating me," she said indignantly, as she drew away from him. "I am a woman, and curiosity is my besetting sin, and your mysterious comings and goings are giving me more

gray hairs than my age entitles me to. It's time to dress for dinner, anyway, and it would only spoil your appetite."

"As you are a woman and acknowledge to curiosity, aren't you anxious to see the contents of that package from Paris?" asked Phillips, smiling. "May I bring it to you when I have dressed?" He looked at her significantly, and she nodded permission as the party dispersed to their rooms.

"You change your nationality, my friend," said Von Ebbstein, as they walked toward their rooms, which were adjoining in the wing given up to bachelors. "At Shimonoseki you was an Englishman."

"That was simply your inference, baron; I never told you that I was," answered Phillips, smiling. "You gentlemen of the diplomatic service never believe the evident thing."

"And I wondered *why* England, mit you dere, was so badly sublied mit information," said the diplomat as he left the American at his door; Phillips, apparently oblivious of the implied compliment, made no answer. A half-hour later he carried a parcel to Mrs. Loring's boudoir, and that lady, in spite of the curiosity to which she had confessed, handed it unopened to her maid.

"Take it to my bedroom, Celeste, and—er you need not trouble yourself to listen at the door after you have closed it, for you don't understand enough English to make it worth your while. Now, Ralston, what is it?"

He smiled at her precaution, but emulated it, and carefully closed the other door, after looking into the hall and satisfying himself that there was no one about, and then handed her a sealed package of papers.

"The princess asked me to give this into your own hands," he said, in a low voice. "I'll tell you anything that you want to know after you have read the contents. Prince Michael stands in a ticklish position, as does every decent Russian with an imbecile puppet nominally an autocrat, and the real power in the hands of the rule or ruin party. May I ask who the Streloffs are?"

"Russians, as you could see, and very

charming, interesting people. I know very little about them, but they had letters to me from Lady Montessoro and Colonel Van Sittart."

"Two eminently respectable, good-natured, stupid sponsors," commented Phillips. "But I never heard of the Streloffs—under that name, at least."

"Which, of course, argues them unknown," said Mrs. Loring sarcastically. for she had not forgiven Phillips for refusing to gratify her curiosity. "Don't you think that I am too worldly-wise to be harboring police spies or revolutionists?"

Phillips raised his hands in protest, and laughed.

"Pretty much all Russians are one thing or the other these days, but I don't accuse your charming guests of being either. I know your abounding hospitality— not to mention the natural curiosity of your sex, to which you have confessed— and I know that you would receive the devil himself, if he had the shadow of an introduction, and you thought he would tell you the latest political and social gossip of Hades," he said, laughing, but his face became grave as he went on. "Just a little hint for your guidance, though, dear lady—if you will permit me. Things are about as bad as they can be in Russia, and you know the length of arm of the secret service, and that its agents are recruited from all classes of society. An expression of opinion which may seem entirely harmless in your drawing-room, a casual quotation from a personal letter, or the mention of a piece of information, may be twisted and given a serious import when sent back by a spy. Don't make Prince Michael's situation more precarious by receiving his country people unless you are very sure of them. May I sit next Madame Streloff at dinner?"

Mrs. Loring was more disturbed than she would admit by Phillips' warning, and she resolved that she would be more careful in the future, but she scouted the idea that there could be any present danger.

"And I thought that you came up here for rest and relaxation," she said,

with a sigh, as she rearranged the table diagram to comply with his request.

Fourteen at table makes a general conversation impossible, and Nelly Edwards, who sat on Phillips' left, transposed young Martinez, who was her devoted admirer, to a seventh heaven of delight by devoting her entire attention to him, so that Phillips had an uninterrupted hour with Madame Streloff, but he rose from the table feeling that their acquaintance had made little progress. He never forgot a face, and he was positive, in spite of something very familiar in her voice and features, that he had never seen hers before, although they discovered that they had many mutual acquaintances. She talked unreservedly but dispassionately of the recent events in her own country, and frankly criticized the dishonesty of the officials which had contributed so largely to its humiliation in the late war, but her point of view was that of an on-looker, and not that of a partizan.

Von Ebbstein, after dinner, joined Phillips, Mrs. Loring, and the Streloffs in front of the fire—the others devoting themselves to bridge—and, greatly to Mrs. Loring's dismay, asked Phillips if he thought the disturbances in Russia would lead to any radical change. She was more troubled than she cared to admit by the warning she had received, and she fidgeted in her chair as she saw that Phillips courted rather than avoided the subject.

"There will be no essential change as a result of all this row, in my opinion," he answered thoughtfully. "It is the old story—just like throwing a stone in a pond. This time the stone is a large one, and the ripples on the surface are more pronounced, but the depths are not stirred. An autocracy, when the mass of the lower classes is so densely ignorant, is hard to upset, and possesses an ideal machinery for suppressing revolution. There have been thousands of arrests, knoutings, summary executions, and banishments, and the situation seems pretty well in hand now."

"Do you think a foreigner in Russia, under the present conditions, could see

enough to form a fair judgment of the true state of affairs?" asked Streloff earnestly.

"Probably not, and that is why I give only my individual opinion for what it is worth," replied Phillips quietly. "I had rather exceptional opportunities to see things, however, as General Retsoff, the governor of the department of Gopertz, where most of the disturbances have taken place, is a personal friend of mine, and I was his guest during the worst of it."

Von Ebbstein, sitting quietly after the discussion was started, was watching Streloff closely, and what he saw when Phillips mentioned Retsoff's name he made a note of on his mental tablets, but to the others the Russians had exhibited no sign.

"It could not have been pleasant in Gopertz—it is under martial law, is it not?" asked Madame Streloff indifferently.

"Yes," answered Phillips, turning to her. "Martial law and the iron hand without the velvet glove. Retsoff is charming socially, but he is not a sentimentalist when dealing with revolutionists, and you are quite right—it was not altogether pleasant."

Mrs. Loring was on tenter-hooks, for Phillips, in spite of his caution to her, seemed to be entering recklessly into topics which she had resolved to avoid, and she determined to remind him of the danger by entering the conversation herself.

"Poor, misguided people!" she exclaimed. "I have known so many of them who have sacrificed position, wealth, and liberty in that cause which seems so hopeless."

To her dismay, Phillips smiled as he looked at her, oblivious of the look of entreaty on her face, and plunged in deeper than ever.

"They never believe that it is hopeless, though," he said. "I saw a great many who had been arrested, and even those who were executed went to their deaths with a resignation which indicated faith in their cause and a belief that they were not being sacrificed in vain."

"Tell us something creepy and thrilling, Mr. Phillips," said Nelly Edwards, who had cut out after the first rubber and joined the group about the fireplace. "You must have been living in a sort of melodrama over there." Mrs. Loring devoutly wished that Nelly were lost in the conservatory with one of her admirers, as Phillips turned to her good-naturedly.

"The details of life in Gopertz are thrilling and creepy enough, but hardly subjects for drawing-room conversation, Mrs. Edwards," he said; "but I'll tell you one little incident, if you like."

Von Ebbstein shifted his chair a trifle, that he might have a better view of Madame Streloff, who was quietly fanning herself; and Streloff leaned forward and listened attentively. Mrs. Loring, after one helpless look at Phillips, resigned herself to the inevitable, feeling that he was weaving a rope for her brother-in-law's neck.

"Arrests, the departure of prisoners into exile, and summary executions were a matter of daily routine for several months in Gopertz," said Phillips quietly. "The small game was bagged and dealt with out of hand; a squad of Cossacks, a convenient wall—bang!—and the Cossacks galloped off about their business, and left the remains of another martyr to the cause—to be stealthily carried away by his friends. The more important prisoners were brought to headquarters to be questioned, and, although I suspect that moral suasion was not the only means used in the casemates of the fortress to make them tell their secrets, the officials seemed to get but little satisfaction out of them. Retsoff swore when I chaffed him about the inability of his secret police to get information, but one night at dinner he was peculiarly good-natured, and asked me to come to his office in the evening. 'I'll show you something which will convince you that my secret service is good,' he said, as he looked at his watch. 'I have found a Judas Iscariot at last, and my men must have bagged the whole lot of the highest ones by this time, and you will meet an aristocratic lot of

prisoners instead of a batch of moujiks.' I went to the office with him, but there was only one prisoner there—a young lieutenant of artillery, heavily ironed and guarded by a Cossack on either side. Retsoff made inquiry about the others, and when he heard the report of his subordinates, his own language was quite inadequate to express his feelings, and he used most of the strong words in several other tongues which he speaks to convey his opinion of police stupidity, informers, and things in general. As near as I could gather from his polyglot cursing, he had paid a large sum—twenty-five thousand rubles, I think he said—to one of the group to betray his companions, and all had escaped but this one officer."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Madame Streloff, straightening up in her chair, but in a moment she sank back and laughed. "I don't mean to contradict you, Mr. Phillips, but the one thing I have always admired in those unfortunate and misguided plotters, is their unswerving and devoted loyalty to each other, and I can't believe that one of them could be bought."

"I don't want to shatter an idol, but the proof was convincing to me, Madame Streloff, and I certainly did not want to believe it," answered Phillips gravely. "Like you, I have always admired that loyalty of the nihilists, revolutionists, or whatever the opposing party may be called in Russia." Madame Streloff said nothing, and Von Ebbstein, who had pricked up his ears at the involuntary outburst, maintained his quiet scrutiny of her face as Phillips continued.

"Retsoff questioned his one prisoner, but obtained no information from him; the boy—for he was little more—refused to acknowledge anything that would incriminate himself or any one else. He showed no particular emotion until Retsoff taunted him with the fact that he had been betrayed for money, and then he contemptuously told Retsoff that he lied; a rather risky remark, considering that the general has a hot temper and held the power of life and

death, but to my surprise he took it good-naturedly." Phillips paused for a moment, and then looked steadfastly at Madame Streloff, as he continued earnestly: "I hope never again to see such an expression on a human face as came over that of the boy when Retsoff took a bundle of papers from the safe and showed them to him. He apparently recognized the handwriting at the first glance, and he became perfectly livid, but not another word could threats, promises, or cajolery get out of him, and the general ordered him to be removed. Retsoff told me afterward that his information was correct, but that the traitor had evidently weakened, or the conspirators were warned by somebody else, and the young officer was the only one found at their meeting-place."

Madame Streloff shrugged her shoulders when he had finished the story, and her husband, after a quick glance at her, spoke.

"A police trick to impress you," he said skeptically. "I have no doubt that it was a little comedy arranged by General Retsoff for your especial benefit. I know him, and he does not fail when he starts to do a thing. There is 'honor among thieves,' and I hardly think that Retsoff would have betrayed his informant if the story had been true."

"I shouldn't call it a comedy, exactly," replied Phillips grimly. "Criminologists tell us that the old saying about thieves' honor is fallacious, but there is another one, 'Dead men tell no tales,' which has not been disproved, and the prisoner's knowledge did him little good. I don't think that I was supposed to see it, but his body was at the foot of the wall in the courtyard when I came down the next morning, and it showed that the knout had been used before his execution." Nelly Edwards gave a little gasp of horror, but the Russians were impassive.

"I suppose that you will think us barbarians," said Streloff apologetically. "This all seems very horrible to you—and it is—but in a land where the assassin, the bomb-thrower, and the conspirator are always active, Natalie and

I have seen too much of that sort of thing to be shocked by a single example."

Mrs. Loring, to her great relief, was able to lead the conversation into safer channels, and to keep it there until the ladies retired and the men drifted to the smoking-room. Phillips lighted a long, black cigar, and stood in front of the fireplace chatting with Von Ebbstein about Japan, while the others gathered about Littleton, who was exhibiting the arsenal which he had brought to kill big game in the Rockies. Suddenly there was a sharp report, the cigar which Phillips held between his lips disappeared in dust, and a steel-jacketed bullet buried itself in the oak mantel.

"You damn fool, don't you know enough to—oh—er—I beg your pardon!" exclaimed Bobby Edwards, as Streloff let a new model of a repeating pistol drop to the floor and gazed at it in white-faced amazement. Littleton quickly picked it up and threw open the magazine, a perplexed expression on his face.

"Really extraordinary careless of me!" he said. "I don't see how I happened to leave a cartridge in there.

"Mr. Phillips, you vill haf a fresh cigar," remarked Von Ebbstein, grinning at him; and Phillips took it, and shrugged his shoulders as he accepted Streloff's stammered apology.

"A miss is as good as a mile," he said, as he scratched a match. "But, I say, Littleton, these cigars are too good to be destroyed by trick shooting, so put that arsenal away, will you?"

"Dose cigars are so goot dot I vill shmoke a last von in your room, if you object not," said Von Ebbstein to Phillips, when the party broke up for the night.

He looked at Phillips admiringly when he had comfortably seated himself in front of the fire.

"You haf goot nerfs, my frent, or perhaps none at all," he said, as he turned the cigar between his fingers. "Dot vas a lucky escape; a matter of less as de lengt' of dis cigar. Between you and—" He made a significant

gesture with his hands, and Phillips smiled.

"You seem to be in doubt as to my future state, baron, but I was *lucky*. It would have been embarrassing to have had my brains musing up the smoking-room, and almost worse for Streloff than for me. Accidents of that kind are always more distressing to the person who is responsible for them than to the victims."

"You are also charitable, my frent, but I vill dell you somedings. Dot vas an accident, not! I saw dot Russian sight dot bistol in de mirror."

"I don't suppose that you would make such a serious assertion unless you were positive of it, baron; but I can hardly credit it. I can't imagine why he should wish to kill me."

"No, you cannot *imagine*; bardon me, I speak de English so badly, but I belief dot vas de wort you used," said Von Ebbstein, looking at him quizzically from under the shaggy eyebrows. "Perhaps it vill shtimulate dot imagination if I recall von of dose English proverbs you used to-night ven you told dot interesting liddle romance of refo-lution—'Dead mans dell no dales!'"

"There is one which fits this particular case better, my dear baron," said Phillips indifferently. "'It's of no use to lock the stable door after the horse is stolen.' My story was told before that pistol went off."

"Not all of it, my frent; you haf not told de name of de prisoner, nor de von vich vas signed to dose papers dot Ret-soff showed to him."

"But I told you that I did not know the name of the traitor," replied Phillips, and Von Ebbstein looked at him innocently as he rose from his chair.

"Yes; you *did* not know—bardon again my English, but I belief you used de past tense of dot liddle verb. I see dot you haf a good lock on your door, my frent. *Schlafen Sie wohl!*"

Phillips smiled as the door closed behind the square shoulders of the diplomat, but he carefully turned the key in that lock and examined the cartridges in the revolver which he slipped under his pillow before he went to bed.

The Streloffs left the following day, called away unexpectedly by a telegram from New York. Madame Streloff, finding Phillips alone in the library when she came to replace a book which she had taken to her room, immediately reverted to the story of the previous evening.

"You know how many of one's intimate friends get dragged into these wretched conspiracies in Russia," she said. "I dare say that your story was true, after all; certainly there can be no question about what you saw with your own eyes. Can you tell me the name of the officer who was captured and shot?"

"Certainly, Madame Streloff, if you wish to know, and I sincerely trust that I shall not distress you by mentioning the name of any one you knew. It was Lieutenant Ivan Trelofsky."

"Thank you, Mr. Phillips; my presentiment was true, I did know the poor boy," she said quietly. "May I ask a favor of you—that you will not tell that story again to amuse a frivolous woman?"

"I shall never tell it again to amuse a frivolous woman or to discover a secret," he said grimly. "May I ask a favor in return, Madame Streloff—will you let me know the sequel to it, if there ever is one?"

"I have had proof that this is a small world, Mr. Phillips, but it is probable that we shall never meet again—but, if there is a sequel, you shall know it. Good-by." He bowed low, apparently not seeing the half-proffered hand, and she walked slowly from the room.

A month later Phillips dropped in to ask Mrs. Loring for a cup of tea in her Washington house, and found Von Ebbstein already installed before the fire in her boudoir.

"I am glad to see dot you are vell, my frent," he said, with a twinkle in his deep-set eyes. "I drust dot your nerfs are still goot."

"They had a bit of a shock yesterday," replied Phillips, with a quick glance at him. "I don't know that you read the New York papers, but, if you do, you may have noticed yesterday

morning the account of a rather unusual murder."

Mrs. Loring looked at him disapprovingly.

"Ralston Phillips, you are degenerating!" she exclaimed. "You have been a week in New York, with no end of interesting things going on, and the first piece of news you bring back is a common murder story."

"It is hardly that, dear lady," he answered apologetically. "Probably it will be so regarded in New York, but it will have an interest for you, for you knew the victim, at least."

Von Ebbstein muttered a smothered "So!" and Mrs. Loring smiled incredulously.

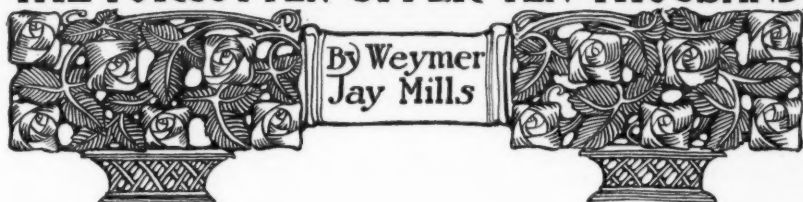
"The head-lines caught my eye at breakfast yesterday; the account of a man being found dead in an obscure slum of the city with a dagger between his shoulders, and on his breast a paper, with the one word 'Traitor' printed on it. I can't tell you why I did it, but I went to the morgue to see the body. It was Streloff, his beard shaved off, dressed as a sailor and looking as if he had been having a tough time of it. Naturally, I didn't care to be mixed up in it, so I said nothing about my identification. When I got back to the club, I found a note enclosing the newspaper-clipping which I had read at breakfast. It is the sequel to the story which I told you in the country." He handed the note, written in a feminine hand on fine paper, to Mrs. Loring, and she read it aloud:

You misjudged me, but I shall keep my promise. Your story was true. The Judas Iscariot was the husband, his one victim the brother of the miserable woman whom you knew as Natalie Streloff.

"I thought that you would be interested in it," said Phillips, as he threw the note and clipping on the fire. "And now may I have some tea? I have little time to spare, for I am off to-night for Santo Domingo."

"It is bretty near de hurricane season in de Vest Indies now," said Von Ebbstein, looking at him with twinkling eyes as he wished him a safe voyage.

THE FORGOTTEN UPPER TEN THOUSAND



It has often been said that the one-time young Mr. Diedrich Knickerbocker, who "polked" under the watchful eyes of Korpenay, sipped punch at the City Hotel, and ogled the ladies from his marble doorstep in the elegant Chambers Street, would suddenly lose all his Brummel airs if he could be transported back to life in the midst of one of our modern Gotham "Assemblies." Allowing for the changes in manners and customs since the early Victorian days, the greatest surprise to him would be the people themselves! Instead of finding the children and grandchildren of his friends and neighbors, the room would be almost entirely given up to aliens. Names that once meant as much to New York as the sound of Trinity's bells are forgotten to-day, and the famous "Upper Ten Thousand," which was the sport of the masses, has slunk into the narrow past of mediocrity.

What is termed our representative New York society is composed largely of persons who have come from the North, South, East, and West bearing the golden keys of Midas. Mr. Diedrich Knickerbocker did not know of them; but many of them have never heard of Mr. Diedrich Knickerbocker. The bewildered gentleman might haughtily finger his quizzing glass without causing any one the least uneasiness. It takes less than a decade to place the wealthy social aspirant on a secure pedestal in the eyes of the public, and once there, it is his turn to use the quizzing

glass. And when his fame grows apace with his ambition, he is oftentimes quite capable of saying: "Who was Diedrich Knickerbocker? I never heard the name mentioned by any one in society!"

It is interesting to trace the changes in that body since the far-away time when Lady Washington held levees on the sixth day of every week at 39 Broadway. That was the period of the Marquise de Moustier's "three hundred." Later, one of the Schuyler daughters could find room for only "two hundred" in a house on Robinson Street. Then came Mrs. Brevoort's "five hundred"; and in the wake of that tinsel band sprang up the famous "Upper Ten Thousand."

How few of the prominent families of the past have retained any of their former prestige. Some have shreds of it, but most of them have taken to the back streets. This is as it should be in the metropolis of the republic where half a century oftentimes sounds the knell of the greatest fortune. We want no lords but those of finance and commerce, and yet we hear constantly of the American aristocracy—that many of the "best people" were present at Mrs. Gotham's ball; that Mrs. Gotham is cutting down her visiting-list and becoming more exclusive. Who are Mrs. Gotham's "best" New Yorkers, and why should the lady have claims to exclusiveness? What keeps the dame from speaking to the neighbors whose windows face her own? Why must she refuse to return the bows of her aspiring acquaintance? Is she really an American and all the word stands for, or has she become a ridiculous imitation

of a foreign noblewoman? Some wag has suggested an American Burke; and when one realizes what a boon it would be to Mrs. Gotham and her many friends and admirers, it seems quite a sensible idea. Alas, then, for cherished fallacies and august pretensions! We could read:

MARY
JANE
GOTHAM

Town House Fifth Avenue.
Country Estates — Gothamville, Long Island, and Gotham's Towers, Newport.
Descended from Peter Gotham, who escaped from Newgate, and was sent to New York as an indentured servant, 1725. (The Hudson portrait in the dining-room, town house, painted in Paris, 1895.)
Peter Gotham, his son, 1780—The famous lottery man was sent to the Pagoda for defrauding the public.
Peter Gotham, his grandson, 1810—Water Street china merchant. (The Sèvres in the blue drawing-room in the town house not purchased by him.)
Peter Gotham, his great-grandson, 1850—A California miner. Invested his funds in New York real estate.
Peter Gotham, his great-grandson, and Mary Jane Gotham's father—A member of the "best" society.

MARY
JANE
GOTHAM

Not related to the renowned Mary Jane Gotham.
Town House—No. 1000 One Hundred and Forty-fifth Street.
Country Estates—None given.
Descended from Jonathan Gotham, secretary of Good Queen Anne, who was granted a tract of land along Hudson's River. (His portrait, by Hogarth, hangs in the London National Portrait Gallery.)
Jonathan Gotham, his son (1780)—Endowed the first New York hospital.
Jonathan Gotham, his grandson (1810)—Gave the city its first public fountains, and introduced a system of drainage. President of the Gotham Bank, and later made governor of the State.
Jonathan Gotham, his great-grandson (1850)—Sold all the New York

real estate and invested it in mining properties.

Jonathan Gotham, his great-grandson, and Mary Jane Gotham's father—Tried to discover how to live on nothing a year. He was not a member of the "best" society.

These are two of the exposures for the American Burke's Peerage. While such a record might not be agreeable to Mary Jane Gotham, who is no doubt one of the ladies with an overweening fondness for class distinctions, it would prove a boon to the poor Mary Jane Gotham if she still remembers her grandfather's and her great-grandfather's services to this country. It would point out that she should be entitled to consideration for the civic accomplishments of her forbears, and the knowledge that the "best" society must ever read of them would make some amends for the snubs and insults which are bound to fall upon the shabby-genteel person.

We hear a great deal nowadays of the old family set, but, according to the chroniclers of society, the old family set is supposed to consist of a few often-repeated names. The public knows the names—Livingston, Van Rensselaer, etc., the early land-owners, but the descendant of the man who did everything to give the Erie Canal to New York is allowed to die unnoticed, and the great-granddaughters of the general who was one of Washington's chief aids in the Revolution, and helped him win the freedom of the country, live in unmolested obscurity.

And what a boon an American Burke would be to some members of the known old families. Take the prolific Livingstons, for instance. At the beginning of the past century there were a few hundred of them. Scores of Roberts, Gilberts, Johns, and Phillips; several colonels and captains; the Tory Livingstons; the Chancellor Livingstons, etc. How many of them must have married Browns and Joneses, and to-day oftentimes rebel at the fact that they are not the openly recognized cousins of the powerful clan.

In the years of the "Upper Ten

Thousand," society was not broken up into a number of petty cliques. Social intercourse was less restricted. There was more of a feeling of good fellowship. The denizens of De Pau Row were presented to the Pike Street dwellers when they chanced to meet in a drawing-room. Women were not afraid to speak to their less fortunate sisters in the full glare of Broadway. Kindly impulse ruled, and there was no drawing back and considering the effect of a gracious act on one's social position. The English noblewoman may receive any person she likes in her drawing-room, but the American woman who desires to walk in the path of the "best society" must always pause and consider whether the appearance of Mrs. S. or Mrs. J. would damage her own standing. The American Burke might save her from something worse than a Lady Snobbington. All her friends would then know if her great-grandfather was a governor or a boot-black. She could receive them fearlessly, aware that they came because of her own powers of attraction. She would be sure of herself, and not afraid to be American.

Turning the pages of "Philip Hone's Diary," the greater part of which was written on pink note-paper, we come to the list of those he and his girls remembered seeing at Mrs. Brevoort's famous ball in the forties. Under February 20, a few days before the affair, he writes:

The fashionable folk are remarkably well off just now in the possession of an inexhaustible topic of conversation in Mrs. Brevoort's bal costume, which is to come off next Thursday evening. Nothing else is talked about, the ladies' heads are turned nearly off their shoulders, the whiskers of the dandies assume a more ferocious curl in anticipation of the effect they ought to produce.

Later, with a glowing account of the ball, follow names that do not read like the list of one of our modern parties: Anderson, Brevoort, Bryan, Boggs, Brancher, Burns, Barclay, Berry, Coster, Cruger, Constant, Dutilh, Derhan, Door, Delprat, Delauncey, De Emmett, O'Tolle, Elwell, Flemming, Fitch, Foster, Graves, Gracie, Haight, Howland,

Hills, Hoffman, Hone, Schermerhorn, Roy, Meredith, Laight, Graeme, Laurie, Langdon, McEvers, Messinger, Otis, Ogden, Oakley, Prime, Pemberton, Pearson, Scala, Russell, Seaton, Wright, White.

Parties were seldom chronicled in the newspapers during the first half of the nineteenth century. Mr. Diedrich Knickerbocker was aghast at the possibility of his name appearing in print. A delightful story is told of an old gentlewoman who had taken a certain paper for many years. When the society note came in vogue she was among the first to rebel at it. One summer morning she read with indignation that Miss S. would summer at Saratoga; and hastily wrote to the editor discontinuing her subscription to the daring sheet.

Editors must have had less to do in those days, for this one came to ask her the reason for her action. "A lady does not care to see her name in print," she assured him, and when he informed her that her friends were actually sending him items about themselves, she is said to have fainted. Private journals and a few musty letters are the only record we have of them. The Sophy Sparkles and the belles who followed in their wake are buried in oblivion. Only their ghostly canvases are left to wander down the years, telling us that they were sweet and fair.

Sometimes when we stand on the steps of that fine old church, St. John's—the St. George's of New York—we can dream of them. Theater Alley and the Marine Parade are other places they are like to haunt.

With the dispersal of the "Upper Ten Thousand" have gone many quaint customs. Girls do not enter their first ballroom in leading-strings, which were cut away by their fond mamas—sometimes a bit of ribbon was left for a very ardent swain; a gentleman at an evening affair no longer asks a lady if he may offer her his compliments, and together they sip fragrant glasses of Madeira. That jewellike wine has gone out of fashion, and only at a few houses does it retain its partnership with sherry.

The Pompeys and Caesars of the thirties and forties, who held the flint-glass decanters, have departed with the wine. The dashing Mr. August Belmont has been credited with reviving the fashion of liveried servants in New York some time before the Civil War. Many of the "Upper Ten Thousand" looked upon them as un-American, and Nathaniel P. Willis jestingly wrote of a plush footman being stoned down Broadway.

A coat of arms on letter-paper would have called forth a storm of derisive comment. It is only in the last decade that they have been widely used in the city. Of course many of the Tory families who had remained in the country still retained silver marked with their escutcheons. But the birth of the republic was supposed to have put an end to all such aristocratic indulgences. In the American Burke we will record beside the name of Mrs. Gotham—"Arms used after 1896"; and beside the name of the neglected Mrs. Gotham—"Arms used previous to 1776." This will give the custom its proper valuation, and add to the study of heraldry in America.

The "Upper Ten Thousand" never lacked for amusement. Many a departed Broadway hostelry saw their assemblies. The balls were conducted with less formality than those of today. Gray-haired men and women always danced in the first quadrille, and sometimes throughout the evening, until the candles burned low and the musicians began the last gay old "Sir Roger." Every one invited to a party was thought good enough to meet the entire list of guests, and the hostess was not looked upon as a woman of tact and breeding unless the spirit of happiness filled her rooms. She led the possible wallflowers to the arms of the merriest blades, and saw that they danced each varsouvienne, redowa, and mazurka.

There were waltzes, too, for some of the older dowagers to wag their heads over—the gliding, sensuous waltzes, composed by the second Strauss, did not come in until the sixties, but Mr. Diedrich Knickerbocker could hop most

divinely; and, although his grandmother may not have approved of his terpsichorean accomplishments, his partner did, and that was all that was necessary to his well-being.

When the revelry ended, the old-time hostess came very close to the street door to bid her guests good night. Sometimes they called farewell from the pave, and the night watch heard them and laughed. The North River world was more like a huge family then, and a million leagues away from our present Gotham.

When Mr. Diedrich Knickerbocker went to the theater he emulated his English cousins, and sought the town's favorite in the green room. There he laid a sprig of bays at the feet of the son or daughter of Thespis, coupling it with an invitation to dinner at the Knickerbocker residence. That social dictator, Mr. Hone, was often at the stage door of the Park; and Fanny Kemble has wickedly described in her diary the meal she took at his house.

Men of talent were looked up to, and oftentimes loved by the town, and the authors of the period were received with open arms. Even poor McDonald Clarke had his worshipers, and, as for Irving, he was a veritable prince of New York. Nowadays, the famous actor or author is courted by society for exhibition purposes. The man of genius without public recognition is never received. As Mrs. John King Van Rensselaer has written: "Midas pays for the wares offered to him, but does not condescend to associate with the creators." Genius has no place near the "best people." Mrs. Gotham is too busy clinging to the leadership that Mr. Gotham's millions and the kindly newspaper men have given her, to dare stray from the path the gentleman from Savannah once laid out for New York society.

The "Upper Ten Thousand" may be said to have dispersed with the whirlwind of the Civil War. Simple, unpretentious hospitality became a thing of the past. A set of newly rich families were arriving in New York, each anxious to outdo the other in point of lav-

ish display. Many of the balls of the sixties and seventies will be remembered as having introduced wealthy and aspiring persons to the notice of the old inhabitants. The richest of these were culled from the "Upper Ten Thousand," and the reign of Midas began.

At first their sumptuous entertainments were frowned upon by the conservative element, but gradually they took strong hold upon the social world. Those uninvited consoled themselves by decrying the affairs, and endeavoring to filch the tinsel crowns from the self-elected dictators. Others brought the portraits of their Mayflower ancestors, or some of the multitudinous

"Signers" down to the front hall, and bade the vulgarians look at them. Many retired to genteel obscurity.

The American Burke will do them all a good turn. It cannot bring back the days of Mr. Diedrich Knickerbocker, but it will at least simplify a complex social system. With Midas shown his proper place, and false pretensions and absurdities exposed, the reign of wit and breeding will begin again. Mrs. Gotham, her ancestry open to the world, may speak to Mrs. Gotham without fear; and the latter lady, though laid low by poverty, can seek solace in the thought that builders of the city are not forgotten.



THE DESERT

HERE, long ago, below a leaden sky,
 Titans and devils strove in leaguer vast.
 Their scarped entrenchments riddled, ruined lie;
 Mesa on mesa, wave on wave upcast:
 A molten sea of tumult petrified,
 Where giant graves the broken ranks divide.

Here heaven's siege-guns thunder sullen still.
 The baffled lightnings stab the barren sand.
 Here lurks the rattlesnake and strikes to kill.
 The cactus sentinels an arid land.
 Like tears that women shed in vain in pain
 There falls the broken promise of the rain.

And here twin threads of steel have traced the trail
 That man must follow on to victory.
 Here must he strive, however nature fail;
 The mountain's secret water-springs set free
 Till children smile, whene'er a garden grows,
 To see the desert blossom like the rose.

JOHN CURTIS UNDERWOOD.



FROM ace to deuce there is no card in the pack that carries the entailed romance of a man's visiting-card. They exchange cards, do the two messieurs, and to-morrow, at gray dawn, they are spitting each other. And in this record is shown how an oblong slip of pasteboard, inscribed "Doctor Keswick," settled the business of a big steeplechase.

At the very beginning of the happenings, Banfield Leigh popped into the city train at Gravesend. He was irritable; a day wasted—that was all. He had traveled all the way to Gravesend to buy a steeplechaser that should have been pulling a cab about the streets of New York. The horse was light of bone, top-heavy, evil-tempered—everything that was bad. No wonder his owner wanted to sell him! So, when a swarthy little man, carrying a hunting-saddle, bumped into the seat beside Leigh, and filled the latter's lap with a mass of greasy, muddy pigskin, the latter waxed antagonistic.

In addition to the saddle on his knee, the little man had something of disquietude upon his mind—it made him restless; he fairly massaged his neighbor's ribs with an elbow; sometimes it was the pommel of the saddle, and again the stirrup-irons that made vicious pilgrimages into Leigh's domain.

He was also voluble, talkative, questioning, familiar—taking no cognizance of the barrier that hedges the unacquainted.

Did Leigh know if they'd get to the Forty-second Street depot by seven-

thirty? Was the seven-thirty the last train for Colton? Then the little man rummaged pockets—relegating to his neighbor's care the saddle—and brought forth a time-table.

Yes, by Jingo! seven-thirty was the last train. Curse the luck! Also his boss, Trainer Bill Chester, who was a swine! Then he re-searched his pockets, exploring the corners of those in his trousers with minute care; but whatever it was he looked for, it did not abide in the numerous receptacles of his clothes.

With a sigh that carried to Leigh's nostrils the trying odor of beer, the little man dragged the saddle from its custodian's lap, raking the victim's legs with the heavy strap-buckles, and exclaimed despondently: "Well, I'm damned!"

His companion thought encore to this observation.

Then the little man recurred to his troubles of the day. He had the time of his life delivering the worst mule-brained bronco that ever masqueraded as a race-horse. Blinkum was a rank 'un—and Trainer Chester was another.

Leigh gleaned from the recital that Trainer Chester—who was a union of Devil and Shylock—had sent Dodson (the stranger claimed emphatically that he was Hank Dodson, the best horse-rubber in America, bar none) up from Colton with a horse to deliver, and barely enough money in his pocket for expenses; and the horseman had met other horsemen of the days of yore, at Gravesend, and now he hadn't a stiver in his pocket. He'd miss his train, sure, and have to sleep on the curb.

Beyond doubt, the parchment-faced

little man who reeked of the stables was an affliction; but, also, he carried the badge of freemasonry that exists on the turf—he was a companion of thoroughbreds. So Leigh melted, in commiseration for the stranger's plight, and loaned him five dollars.

Of course fate had arranged all this—it was just the beginning of several things tending to an end; but neither Leigh nor the garrulous one knew this.

The money delayed Dodson's anxiety, and Leigh felt that the obtained restfulness of the journey up Third Avenue was worth the price.

At Twenty-third Street Dodson asked for the time.

"Seven-thirty! Missed it, by hickory!" he cried; "but I guess I'm on Easy Street, so it don't cut much ice now. I'll get to Colton early in the morning. I got a stiff day ahead for to-morrow; got to bring the horses up to Morris Park. Say"—he interrupted his monologue to ask—"do you play the horses at all, sir—do you ever bet on a good thing?"

"Not often."

"But you do, sometimes. You're white, you are; you derricked me out of a hole, an' I ain't takin' somethin' for nothin' never no more, see? I'll give you a good thing for Morris Park; you can bet your sleeve-links on it, and if it don't win, you just write on your cuff that Hank Dodson is a chink. We got a horse in our stable named Gun Metal—write that down, mister, for its solid mahogany, Gun Metal. He's by Artillery, out of Steel Blue, and he's the best steeplechaser I ever clapped eyes on. He can just fly his jumps, and gallop a mile in one-forty flat. But the boss he's a crook from way-back, an' there's some hanky-panky on with Gun Metal. There's another duck got a horse in the stable named Little Jack. This chap keeps it dark about ownin' this horse, but I'm on, see? They'll just about win with the one that gets 'em the goods. If you're out to the races, come an' ask me—I'll put you wise to what's doin'. Forty-second Street! I got to skip. Don't forget Gun Metal! I'll send this fiver—"

But the little man was gone, using the saddle as a battering-ram to clear a passage to the platform.

The scrunching thing of velocity that whirled Leigh up-town speedily drew him beyond the confines of the momentary atmosphere that had wedged, like a drive of east wind, into his day's chapter. The man who had had the time of his life with Blinkum, who had an optimistic faith in Gun Metal, obscured into the mosaic of life's bric-à-brac. Had Leigh known that the chessmen were as definitely marshalled as though it were a Ruy Lopez, he might have called this "move one"; but he knew nothing beyond the fact that he was probably out a fiver. So he ate his dinner, and slept, and potted around all the forenoon over the important unimportant things, and at one o'clock, seated at a little table in the Café Martin for a bite of lunch, some more Gun Metal obtained.

Leigh's table was one of those that stand in Indian file facing the long leather-backed seat that runs the full length of the room. At the table on his left two men faced each other. Unmistakably one was a horseman; his personality was bathed in the consequential solemnity of a trainer. Vis-à-vis was one whose face, dark-skinned, avarice-glazed, hawk-drooped, effected Leigh disagreeably. It was a compelling, persuasive face. Now, drawn with the intensity of some engrossing thought, it was wholly vicious. Its owner leaned an elbow on the table, and alternately talked and penciled something on a card. Once or twice a clear enunciated word of little meaning reached to Leigh's ears, piping through the shuffling clatter of the café. He heard, half-clearly, "twenty thousand to split." That was nothing; all the big cafés up and down Broadway and Fifth Avenue echoed and reechoed to such large sums at every lunch-time. But presently a name that claimed his interest came riding on the back of a carrying jumble—"Gun Metal"—and immediately he heard a correlative: "It won't hurt him."

Then practically the curtain dropped.

Leigh's waiter came with resonant dishes; the two men on his left had their coffee and cigars, their bill, and were gone.

As Leigh presently reached down his hat from a hook on the wall and turned, his waiter tendered daintily, between finger and thumb, a card, saying: "This is m'sieu's, I think; m'sieu must have dropped it."

Leigh took the card; it was inscribed: "Doctor Louis Keswick." He turned it over curiously, and on the back he read:

Gun Metal.

Cannabis Indica (Gungah), 4 drs.
Administer as ball mixed with linseed-meal.

The waiter had gone, and Leigh, puzzling over the curious coincidence of Gun Metal's name coming again to his attention, put the card in his case.

Out on Twenty-fifth Street, its inception outlined in his mind. The hawk-faced man who had elbowed the table, pencil in hand, had certainly written it—the name, Gun Metal, attested to that fact. Leigh drew the card forth and studied the prescription. In an abstract way he knew something of the stimulating horse-dope—cocaine and strychnin were the base for these instigators to exertion. A dope of this sort was introduced subcutaneously with a little syringe, or put on the horse's tongue. But the card carried a formula for a ball, and the large dose, four drams, suggested a sedative, a brake upon the animal's speed.

He crossed to the drug-store on the corner, and asked the clerk what the prescription really meant.

The druggist looked curiously at the questioner and answered: "You can't get that put up here without a doctor's prescription. If you took that, you'd never wake up; it's a dose for a horse!"

"For a horse! Would it kill a horse?"

The clerk studied closely the quantities for a minute and answered: "No, it wouldn't kill him; but it would make him feel pretty dopey."

Leigh returned the card to his case, and all up Broadway the curious co-

incidence of Gun Metal's name coming back almost as an echo of Dodson's tip clung to him. Perhaps the racy-looking man was Chester, the trainer; and very likely Doctor Keswick was the man who had the other horse, Little Jack, in Chester's stable. However, even now, Gun Metal, his possibilities and his troubles were but a nebulous something far out on the horizon of Leigh's orbit. He had worries of his own without interesting himself in something that was distinctly not his business. It required a little force of will to oust the matter from his mind, however.

Perhaps if fate had not presented Leigh with a desire for the theater that evening, Gun Metal and the vicissitudes of his career might have troubled him no more.

We eat, sleep, and out of ourselves perform little acts, and all the time the other thing that has no name puts our hand and our mind to that which is, or is to be. So Leigh, with the entanglement of this *It* enmeshing him, looked up from his seat in the stalls and saw Kathleen Braund in an upper box. Up to that time the play had been of fair interest; but now—well, at the end of the first act Leigh, capturing an usher, sent a card to Kathleen's box, and presently, trailing the messenger, was on his way to present himself in answer to the lady's command.

As his guide drew aside the curtain and Leigh entered, he noticed with some surprise that Kathleen was alone. This was curious. She appeared not to have heard his entrance. Her head drooped low, cradled in the palm of her hand, the arm resting on the box-rail.

Leigh coughed announcingly. Without turning her head, Kathleen said, a shade of impatience in her tones: "Oh, I know you're there! Draw up a chair and keep quiet. I am interested in this aria from *Il Trovatore*; that cornetist interests me more to-night than troubles over race-horses. Why did you bring worries to the theater—one comes here to shut out the disagreeable old world with its disappointments—why did you come, anyway?"

Inconsistently enough, the lady had talked herself out of interest in the aria, and now turned a petulant face toward her visitor.

Leigh was transfixed by astonishment. The voice was not Kathleen's, and now the face was one he had never before seen.

"I'm—afraid—there's some mistake," he stammered apologetically. "I—I—where is Miss Braund?"

It was the lady's turn to open her bright eyes wide in astonishment. They sought to penetrate the shadowed interior of the box that half-hid the embodiment of this unfamiliar man's voice. In her new interest she quite discarded the aria, and, rising, took a step toward the intruder.

"I don't know you, sir—you sent me this card?" She held the pasteboard in her small, gloved fingers.

"Yes—I— I sent it to Miss Braund."

"And what has Miss Braund to do with my horse, Gun Metal, please?"

Gun Metal! that infernal name again. And the bewildering entanglement of it all!

Leigh stared idiotically.

"And how came you to send Doctor Keswick's card—you're not Doctor Keswick?"

"Doctor Keswick's card?"

"Yes. And what is this medicine thing—is Gun Metal ill? What is it all about, anyway?"

A ray of light darted in upon the clouded consciousness of the bewildered young man; he had sent the card he had picked up in the Café Martin; also the usher had brought it to the wrong box. He must give the explanation the lady was waiting for.

First, partly sparring for a minute's thought, he said: "Won't you please be seated, madam?"

He drew a chair for the lady. Standing in front of her, he continued: "It's all very extraordinary; I assure you I'm a victim of circumstances. I never heard of Gun Metal before yesterday, but since then nothing else is allowed to occupy my mind."

"But how did you have Doctor Keswick's card?" the lady interrupted.

"And what does the writing on it mean?"

"I could explain that——"

"Please do, then."

"But I'm terribly in the dark. Is Doctor Keswick—he might be your husband, for all I know."

"He's not—I'm Mrs. Van Zandt."

Leigh bowed.

"Doctor Keswick may be your friend."

"He may be." There was an enigmatical inflection in the lady's comment.

"Well, an explanation is certainly due you, madam; I will tell you just how I became possessed of that card, and how it passed into your possession."

Then Leigh related concisely what had occurred, not omitting Dodson's grateful offer of a tip. He felt that Mrs. Van Zandt was freely entitled to the knowledge that had come so casually his way; he was betraying no one's confidence.

When he had finished, Mrs. Van Zandt asked: "And what does this medicine thing on the card mean?"

"A druggist informs me that it would have a stupefying effect upon a horse; and I fancy that, if given on the morning of a race, he would either be unable to start, or run very sluggishly indeed."

"It's simply extraordinary—don't you think so, Mr.——" There was a query in the lady's tone.

"Leigh is my name."

"Oh! it is—you are Mr. Banfield Leigh? Now I know; I thought your face was strangely familiar; I've seen you ride in a steeplechase. And Miss Braund is a friend of mine. She's enthusiastic over your riding. You can do me the greatest favor on earth; I'm going to start Gun Metal in the Union Steeplechase, and won't you ride him for me? My trainer has a jockey, but I think he's not honest."

"I'll ride the horse for you, Mrs. Van Zandt. It seems as though chance had been arranging it all."

"Thank you. Now I shall win the Union; and I have reasons for being

very anxious to win it. I can't tell you just what they are, but they are real reasons. I'll take Gun Metal away from that trainer—I'll report him to the stewards—the villain! I'll have him arrested; wretch, to poison a horse!" Mrs. Van Zandt was working herself into a temper; her large dark eyes flashed, and she was crushing her fan with angry fingers.

"I shouldn't do all that—in fact, I shouldn't do anything, if I were you," Leigh advised quietly. "Is Doctor Keswick a friend of—"

"He's a friend of my husband's."

"Well, you see you have nothing very definite; it might make trouble; and you can't very well take the horse away from the trainer on the eve of a race—not on suspicion. You couldn't state any case they couldn't explain away; they would say the horse had fever, and this was to be given him, perhaps today, to quiet his nerves."

"What am I to do then?"

"You can trust the man, Dodson, who looks after Gun Metal; and, if you like, I'll see him quietly, and tell him to watch the horse. And he can be told that if the trainer acts too suspiciously—insists on anything crooked, that he is to make a stand, tell Chester plainly what he knows, and that he'll get into trouble. That'll stop it. Dodson is as sharp as a ferret—he'll know if there's anything really wrong."

"I think you are right," Mrs. Van Zandt concurred; "I'll leave it to you. Here is my address—if you wish to see me about anything. And here is the card about the medicine—you might—need it. But I shall look for you Saturday in the paddock, prepared to ride Gun Metal. I'll go out to the stables early Saturday morning myself, and I'll speak to Dodson, telling him that he'll be well rewarded for watching the horse. You're sure I can depend upon him?"

"Yes; he is not friendly to the trainer—he thinks Chester is crooked, and he's clever enough to outwit him, I know."

"Well, I fancy fate put this matter in your hands, Mr. Leigh. I hope there's

nothing wrong; but now that we're on the alert, I think it will be all right. You spoke of Miss Braund; she's in the next box. I think you had better go to her. I happen to know that you will be welcome. I am waiting for my husband—I expect him every minute—he was detained. Gun Metal carries one hundred and sixty in the Union; you had better know the weight, so that you can starve a little. I should think it would bother you to ride at that weight. Good-by, and thank you."

Leigh found Kathleen this time; but he said nothing about his extraordinary adventure—simply told her that he was going to ride for Mrs. Van Zandt.

The next morning, Friday, he went out to Morris Park, crossed over to the stabling on the far side of the course, and presently discovered the little man who had massaged his ribs with the saddle the day they journeyed together from Gravesend. He explained the situation to Dodson, promising him a handsome reward for his trouble if he succeeded in getting the horse to the post in good condition.

"I guess I don't need any price for stopping that crook," Dodson answered; "he's a tough! I owe him something myself. He won't get at Gun Metal while I'm in charge of the horse. You just leave it to me. I knowed he didn't mean waddin' with Gun Metal—not this race; I happened to overhear somethin' between him an' that gentleman crook who owns Little Jack. I don't know what the game is, for Little Jack ain't starting in the Union—I guess they want to get Gun Metal well beat, an' make a killin' on him when he starts next time in easy company."

Saturday morning Leigh repeated his visit. As he sauntered carelessly past No. 6 stabling, he saw Dodson standing by the open door of Gun Metal's stall. Leigh continued on, and turned the corner of the stable. There he waited. In a very few minutes he was joined by Dodson.

"Little Jack is carded to start in the Steeplechase to-day," Leigh said.

"What do you make of that?"

Dodson grinned. "I knew this morn-

in' that Little Jack was goin' in the Union. I was ordered to give him just a little pipe-opener, and his hay was cut out last night. But that don't make no difference. Gee! but they'll be mad. There was somethin' doin' this mornin' bright an' early, I can tell you. You see, sir, I slept in Gun Metal's box last night, an' about twelve o'clock I gets walking in me sleep—I'm subject to that, sir—I gets up, an' I guess I must have swapped hosses, puttin' Gun Metal out of No. 9, in Little Jack's stall, that's No. 8, an' Little Jack in Gun Metal's stall. They look a heap alike in the day, let alone in the night. Then I guess I must have fell asleep with Gun Metal in No. 8. About four o'clock in the mornin' somebody woke me, makin' a noise openin' the door of the box in which I had put Little Jack. I reckon the nigger had the boss' key, for the boxes was locked up, and I had the stable key. Just about daylight I swaps the hosses back ag'in; an', say! if Little Jack ain't dopey this mornin' call me a Dutchman."

"What did you do that for?"

"Well, I didn't want to have no row with the boss; an' I wasn't supposed to be sleeping in Gun Metal's stall—see? I didn't know Little Jack was going to start to-day, an' I figured that they meant to give Gun Metal the dope in the night, close to mornin', to see how it would act. I'm goin' to skip back to the stall now; I don't believe the boss has caught on yet that he's give the wrong horse a sleepin' draft. I'll stay by Gun Metal, an' if they try any more hanky-panky I'll jus' call 'em down good an' hard. You can gamble on gettin' the old horse in the paddock sound as a bell. You jus' weigh out an' leave the rest of it to me."

When Leigh went to the paddock that afternoon to weigh out for the race, he met Mrs. Van Zandt. She was waiting for him, evidently. "What is this about last night?" she asked. "That man Dodson says there was something unusual, but says I'm to ask you. He says Gun Metal is all right—is he?"

They walked over to where Dodson

was stripping the horse of his clothing under a tree, Leigh saying, as they walked: "I'll tell you about it after the race—it would only worry you, and Dodson kept the horse free from harm. Look at his eye," he continued, as they stood beside Gun Metal; "he is as healthy as a babe—he's as cool and bright."

"I'm glad of that—*so glad*; I've had a little trouble on my mind that winning this race will put right. I told the trainer yesterday that you were to ride Gun Metal—there he is, standing by the office, and you can get my colors from him—it's time for you to get ready."

As Leigh moved away, Dodson followed. His mummy face was drawn into wrinkled lines of gravity, as he said: "A dreadful thing has happened, sir; Little Jack's sick, an' they got to scratch him. That swine, Chester, is swearin' that somebody got at his hoss. Say, he's takin' a chance! An' he knocked hell's delight outen the nigger as give Little Jack the ball. He thinks the nigger made a mistake an' got into the wrong box; the nigger thinks so, too, that's the best of it. But Gun Metal's all right; he's as bright's a pea—there won't nothin' beat him to-day; he's fit to run the race of his life."

Leigh went up to the trainer and asked: "Where are the colors for Gun Metal, Mr. Chester?"

The trainer looked sullenly at him from under shaggy eyebrows, and, pointing to a little red-faced man who leaned against the wall of the building, said: "There's Gun Metal's colors, that blue jacket. And that's the boy that's goin' to ride the horse. Pat Clancey is carded for this race, so you needn't bother about the colors."

Leigh was dumfounded. But in an instant the thought came to him that this was another trick in the game the trainer was playing.

"Did Mrs. Van Zandt instruct you to put Clancey on Gun Metal?" he asked, in a dry voice.

"That's my business—it's all my business; when I run a stable, I run it—I'm boss, see? Clancey's the stable

jock; Little Jack's scratched, an' my boy's got first call for the mount; he's carded to ride the horse, see? So you'd better trot back to the stand, like a good little man, and watch the race. That's the place for amateur jocks—I ain't got no use for gentlemen riders; professionals are crooked enough, but when swells are up the books don't bet, see?"

"I've just come from Mrs. Van Zandt—she expects me to ride Gun Metal, and I'm going to do so," Leigh answered, in a determined tone.

"Oh, you are, eh? See here, young man, if you make any fuss, interfering with me in my business, I'll have Pinkerton's men put you on the outside, see? I've arranged the jockey for every horse I ever trained. Now, that settles it—clear out!"

"Well, Mr. Chester, I see nothing will do you but a bit of pressure. You and your precious associates in villainy drugged Little Jack, thinking that you were getting at Gun Metal, and now you want to ride a jockey who will take orders from you. And——"

Leigh was interrupted by an oath. The trainer's face had gone greenish-white at first, now it was red with rage. "I'll make you prove that!" he spluttered.

"I shouldn't, if I were you—it would be foolish, also easy."

Leigh drew from his vest pocket his card-case, and, with provoking deliberation, extracted a card. "You have seen this before, I fancy, Mr. Chester," he said. "It's Doctor Keswick's formula for dulling a horse's ambition; the doctor wrote it in the Café Martin."

Leigh proceeded to read the prescription, in a quiet, drawling voice; then he put it back in his pocket, Chester watching this performance with blinking eyes.

"Now, Mr. Chester," Leigh continued, "get that blue jacket off your man. I'll weigh about one hundred and fifty-five in the silks—Gun Metal carries one hundred and sixty, so I'll trouble you for a five-pound saddle."

"I'm damned if I'll set Pat down for any——"

"Stop that!" commanded Leigh. "Do as I say, or I'll have the stewards intervene, and you'll go over the road. Speak to the proper official and get permission to make the change in riders; tell him your jockey can't make the weight, or is sick, or means to pull the horse—anything you like. You played a crooked game and you've lost, that's all there is to it."

The trainer turned sullenly away and spoke to Clancey.

The jockey went into the dressing-room, stripped the colors off, and threw them angrily on a chair. Leigh put them on; then, with the saddle on his arm, made the weight. He watched closely the saddling of Gun Metal. A slack girth might yet throw the game Chester's way.

The trainer saw the steel-gray eye of Leigh upon him as he cinched the saddle-girth, and cursed under his breath.

But now the call to mount horses sounded through the paddock, and Leigh swung to the back of the big bay.

"Good luck!" Mrs. Van Zandt cried, as Leigh turned his horse into line and passed to the course.

Somehow, beyond the paddock gate, Leigh felt the thrill of optimistic exhilaration; something in the strong, powerful stride of the horse as he cantered down to the post told the rider that Dodson's faith was well placed.

At the start there was a wheeling scurry of thoroughbreds, like a troop of awkward cavalry; a mad scramble; the cutting of big saucer hoofs in the turf; the crackling of crisp silk; the roar of the wind in Leigh's ears, and the joy of the gallop in his heart. And on the lawn the horse's owner, sitting with Kathleen Braund, saw Gun Metal taken back in his field to trail at the heels of the other gallopers urged to unwise haste by riders who saw only the winning-post. Up the first round they thundered, the big bay lifting at his jumps as though his feet were winged. And the horse himself, tugging gently at the bit, seemingly called back over the leathern reins: "Faster, faster, faster!"

But when a soft voice came to him coaxingly: "Steady, boy, steady!" and a hand, gentle as a woman's, just lifted at the bit set against his teeth, and he felt the pressure of knees against his shoulder-blades, he lapsed into confidence, and galloped free of rebellion.

Ears pricked, tail straight out, and big, bright eyes wide open in delight, Gun Metal watched in content the five of his kind in front, taking the mud wall, the post and rails, the water-jump without fault, and with the springing swoop of a deer. Down the back stretch, first Gray Bird, and then Red Man are passed. Stronger and stronger and more eager they race; out in front, beating the troubled earth with iron hoofs, are King Cole and Rollo. Their riders are driving; the horses, warm to the strife, stretch their necks, flatten to the ground, and now at the huge wall together they gather their loins for the lift.

The soft earth gives from under the push of Rollo's hoofs; he sways, he strikes—down, his neck drawn to an arch, he goes, and King Cole, half a length behind, crashes into the gray. Right across the jump, close to the wall, is a mass of crumpled life, horse and man.

Too late for Gun Metal to check; too late for Leigh to pull to the right or to the left, or to falter. He sees but one thing—to act. He draws his whip. Like a vise his long legs cleave to the girth; he calls on the bay, he crouches to the wither to take the weight off the straining loins. One cut of the whip, and Gun Metal, answering bravely, lifts high and long and broad, and clears mud wall and fallen horse, staggers from the impact, gathers himself, and again he is galloping, now in the lead.

The stand that had held its breath, cheered with relief. Somebody cried: "What a jockey! Heavens! that is a horse!"

Two women that had sat white-faced felt the hot blood pump back from their hearts and rouge-pale cheeks. One gave a great sob of relief; and after a long pause the other said: "Kathie, your friend Leigh is magnificent. Do you love him, girl? I should, if I weren't married."

"Your horse is winning, Bertha; you'll be able to settle that trouble of Frank's now. I fancy Leigh didn't know how much the winning of this race meant to your brother. There—he's won! There! don't kiss me, you little goose; I didn't ride the horse!"



AGE

THERE was a dream so dear
 I hid it in my heart,
 Lest any alien fear
 Should lure it to depart;
 Yet though I tended there,
 Live as a sacred flame,
 Its beauty sweet and rare,
 I have forgot its name.

There was a grief so great
 It covered night and day;
 Where only shadows wait
 It bore my dream away;
 Yet though for toil and tears
 My joy was held in fief,
 In vain I search the years—
 I cannot find my grief.

CHARLOTTE BECKER.

WHEN SHE WAS AN ONLY BOY

By *Marion Hill*



THE change had taken place, according to little Hester's acute remembrance, at a time of much trouble and many tears.

There had been some one called Brother.

Theoretically, the brother had been Hester's; but in reality he had belonged, body and soul, to father. The two had been inseparable. Then Brother disappeared. No one had ever seen him again. Apparently, no one knew where he had gone to, either, for they all were most particular to tell Hester that he was not under the mound where they put the flowers every Sunday.

To the strange loss, Hester had rapidly accustomed herself. So far, the history of her whole young life had been of beautiful things which came but for a short time and went forever. It is at once the charm and the sadness of babyhood that all time is *now*—yesterday is but a blank forgetting, and to-morrow is non-existent, inconceivable. The sorrow that she felt, and it was heavy, was not for the far-off loss of a brother, but for the ever-present loss of a father. This silent, dreary man with the stern mouth and the aching, asking eyes, was not the father that was rightly hers. *He* had been but another boy; a big one, to be sure, but nothing but a fun-loving, noisy, laughing boy, for all his size. True, Hester had never been an active participant in the good times; for father had belonged to Brother as exclusively as

Brother had belonged to father; no third person had ever come in between them; but still the merry comradeship had been very pleasant to witness, even from the outside, and had made life a continual holiday. Now—Hester shivered with speechless dread at a situation for which she had no name. She had overheard some men say that her father would "lose his mind" if he could not get over his grief. She did not quite know what this new calamity was, but she felt confident it was something to be avoided if possible.

She intuitively divined, too, that certain lonely walks he constantly took were none too beneficial for his moody state, and she had repeatedly offered her companionship, only to have it refused. One day she bethought herself of the brilliant expedient of following him without asking.

So small was the village that following was no hard matter. All the lanes led into the main road, and the main road led past the graveyard. For she had known just where she would find him. Laggingly, her weary, chubby legs tracked him to the mound where Brother—was not. She came unheard, and stood afraid, not daring by speech to intrude upon the awful sorrow which stared from her father's ashen face. He was seated on the ground. From time to time he methodically arranged things, pulling a twig here, or patting a root there; then, all of a sudden, he fell face downward on the mound, clutching at the grass and calling aloud, in a strangled way:

"Oh, my boy, my boy!"

Instantly, down beside him plumped Hester, tugging at him with powerless, baby hands. Her face was white with fear.

"Get up. I'll be your boy," she said breathlessly.

At her touch, he started and struggled to master himself. Momentarily he gave way again and put his head down upon Hester's tiny round shoulder, gasping brokenly:

"That's right, you're my only boy now, baby. You're the old man's only, only boy."

"Yes," said Hester. "Yes; I promise." From a tiny pocket in her brief skirt she dragged a toy handkerchief and pressed it gently against his eyes. He kissed her hand as it passed his lips, but, nevertheless, pushed it wearily away from him. He was preparing to sink again into forgetfulness, when Hester said cleverly:

"I'm tired. Carry me home."

So he picked her up in his arms and carried her. She had leisure to think over two things, and both of them were distressing: in the first place, her father was the Old Man; and, in the second place, she was an Only Boy.

All along she had keenly joyed in her father's youth, and had felt desperately sorry for little girls who had fathers that looked like grandpas. And now—he himself had said it—he was the Old Man. But the other was even worse—to be an Only Boy. Hester was a woman from the top of her curly head to the tip of her slippered toes. Her treasures were flowers, kittens, dolls, baby chickens, and tiny dishes; her kingdom was the home hearth. Would she have to repudiate all sweet, cuddling things and take up with such hard comforts as tops, marbles, and kites? Would she have to desert the peaceful safety of the house for the dog-ridden, bull-menaced, snake-infested dangers of the highway?

Not that she wavered or regretted. Detestable as were the possibilities of her new condition, she was ready for them. Anything, anything to bring back the smile to the Old Man's eyes,

the laughter to his lips! Surely, he would begin to be happy again, now that he had an Only Boy.

But as the days wore on, Hester could see no change in him. Yes, one he now suffered her companionship. He paid scant attention to her, but at least he did not send her away. Tirelessly she trotted beside him, not resenting his silence and distraction, and ever casting him timorous glances in the hope that she might in time discover upon his face the radiance that was its due. But it seemed turned to stone. Evidently she was not coming up to the requirements of an Only Boy. So she sought his assistance.

"What do boys do that girls don't?" was the vague form of an inquiry she pressed upon him.

He took the question to be not personal but ethnological.

"Throw stones, I guess," he said casually. "Girls can't throw."

Here was something definite, and Hester acted accordingly. Early and late she practised the art of throwing stones till she acquired proficiency. Then she began to look for results. But aim straight as she might, and hit as true, the hopeless blankness never lifted from the Old Man's adored young face.

Then Hester looked at the situation despairingly but courageously, and admitted to herself that to make an acceptable Only Boy she would have to go to some frightful lengths. She would study the animal in his lair.

With this purpose in view, she one day forsook the rose-hedged limits of her own lane and wandered down the road to the store. In its vicinity, as she expected, there were agreeable lots of boys. She mentally singled out a group of three who were playing marbles. For awhile she watched them thoughtfully from afar. Then she drew near and said briefly:

"I'm going to play."

"Go on!" cried one of the lads, meaning exactly the opposite. He never even looked up, and the click of the marbles went steadily along.

The Only Boy put her small foot de-

terminedly upon a beautifully clustered bunch, thereby spoiling the whole scheme of things. This, at any rate, gained her the dubious tribute of attention.

"You quit that!" yelled the boys, in unison.

"I'm going to play," repeated the Only Boy stoically.

"Oh, chase yourself!" cried a lad; and, while not approving the sentiment, Hester was thankful for the educational expression, which she gratefully appropriated.

"Chase yourself yourself," she remarked clinchingly. "I'm going to play."

One of the boys, without in the least intending to let fly, for chivalry forbade, here pictorially threatened her with a stone.

It failed to intimidate. It merely furnished her with a new idea. Retiring to a projective distance, she picked up a rock and drove it unerringly into the threatener's hat, quite removing it.

"Will you let me play?" she asked.

Receiving no better permission than a glare of astonishment, she pelted another lad, landing him a stinging one on the knuckles.

"Will you let me play?"

She hardly expected *him* to answer, his mouth was full of hand. There remained but the third lad to convince, and the Only Boy chipped him in the ear.

"Will you let me play?" she persisted.

With one accord, her wounded adversaries burst into tolerant laughter.

"Gee! she can throw, anyhow," said one.

"Let the kid in for a game; it won't hurt us none," cried the second.

"Here, sis, I'll stake you," cried the third, tossing her three crystals; "come on in."

Wallowing bravely in the hated dust, the Only Boy received a good coaching in the mystery of the spheres. That she ended with a handful of earnings was due less, it must be confessed, to her skill than to the intemperate courtesy

of the American boy—when he feels inclined that way.

Rocking her multicolored prizes in her two begrimed palms, Hester wended her slow way home. She was anxious to get there, and yet she dreaded it, for she knew that her father would be returned from his business and would be again at his fatal moping. Her wary knowledge of his habits made her search for him in the library.

Yes, there he was in the old place—seated witlessly beside the desk upon which was Brother's picture, his idle hands tapping the cover of an unopened book, his strained eyes fixed on lonely vacancy.

Hester coughed raucously. Then he looked at her. She immediately flipped some marbles in his astonished direction, which he caught mechanically.

"Here, Old Man, I'll stake you," said the Only Boy. She dropped to the floor, assumed a businesslike attitude, and beckoned imperatively. "Come on in."

At last she was on the right track! Flinging back his head in the old, boyish way, her father suddenly laughed. It was joyous and irrepressible, even if it did last only next to no time. The sweet, rare sound tingled through Hester's heart, making it beat with a frightened flutter. But she showed no sentiment. She merely braced her pudgy thumb in the carpet, scrawled a circle with her fingers, and remarked:

"Chase yourself, and knuckle down."

With a murmur of "poor lonely baby," which to Hester bore not at all upon the situation, the Old Man dropped to the floor and "came on in."

To whom, in all the world, did "lonely" apply? How could any one be lonely when all outdoors was a beckon with society—and society of the right sort? Why, at that very moment, Hester herself was fairly aching to go out among her daisy children in the meadow lot—long-stemmed, giddy, bobbing creatures, always whispering and giggling and nodding at one another. They were very gossips of flow-ers, full to the brim with tales; right good company, once one became accus-

tomed to their rather commonplace limitations. Of a choicer sort were the quiet clovers. They had a most piquant reserve, and over them constantly shimmered a drove of tiny white and yellow butterflies—not the big, wicked-looking kind, with bad faces and prongs, like aerial grasshoppers, but tiny, tiny, tiny butterflies, as innocent as petals blown from a primrose. And all the apple-trees had baby apples on them. And there was a nest in the honeysuckle. And kittens in a barrel in the woodshed. Lonely! What business had people to be lonely in such a teeming world?

Hester resolutely forced these waiting allurements out of her mind and resigned herself to barren marbles. Several times during the game did the Old Man's laugh ring out, and always at some uncouth utterance which Hester parroted from her vivid remembrance of her recent companions down by the store. She anxiously and thankfully took silent note of each success, and pledged herself to garner a choice new stock of expletives.

Truly, being an Only Boy meant plenty of hard work and no fun. A very tasteless occupation, for instance, this banging about of marbles. She was glad when the game came to its mysterious finish.

"Who won, Old Man?" she questioned dubiously.

"Why, you, to be sure," he replied, gathering the marbles and stowing them variously away upon her person. "You ought to have trouser pockets. Where else is a fellow to put things?"

"Ought I?" asked Hester, paling.

"Indeed you ought."

"Have you lost your mind, Old Man?"

At this, the Old Man quite gave one of his former joyous whoops of amusement. But Hester was anything but joking. To help preserve the Old Man's mind, she had just tired her back, grimed her hands, and scratched her knees, and she naturally wanted to know whether her suffering had availed much.

"Have you?" she insisted.

"Why, no; I think not," he replied, very seriously, in spite of a pleasant light which danced in his eyes.

"Where is it?" persisted Hester.

"Where is what?"

"Your mind."

"Right in here," he said, tapping his forehead.

"Inside your head?"

"Yes."

"Oh!"

Hester took comfort. A head seemed a safe place. She went thoughtfully away, looking back once to note gladly that the smile still lingered on his dear face, and that his glance had not drearily died, but was brightly following her. The sight of so much success made her heart surge victoriously, and gave her courage for the imminent martyrdom of trousers.

Determinedly, she trudged up-stairs to her fate. Just once, in the serene and dimity-frilled seclusion of her small room, her outraged womanliness bewailed itself in a burst of tears. Trousers! No more lacy petticoats; no more spreading, embroidered skirts; no more ruffled aprons with floating sashes and strings; just trousers. After her sacrificial tears had wept themselves dry, she went to her sweet-scented clothes-box, dug down to the banished articles at the very bottom, and dragged up a despised pair of overalls, forgotten of all but herself.

Vividly she remembered the frightful occasion of their first appearance. The grown-ups had presented the garment to her under the utterly misfit name of "rompers," attempting to disguise the effrontery of it in that vague title, much as they occasionally tried to drown out in a glass of soda-water the vicious sickeningness of castor-oil—and with as conspicuous a lack of success. The rompers had taken the romp promptly out of Hester, sending her into such hysterics of rebellion that the grown-ups had wisely dropped the subject. They recognized that her wee, incomprehensible but none the less charming modesty had been shocked by the things, and they all hastened to forget the whole bad business. No one

but Hester knew what had become of the insults themselves. It was her tiny hand which had thrust the blue-jean atrocities to the bottom of the clothes-box. It seemed an execrable enough place, for, from much painful previous experience, Hester was of the opinion that anything which got down *there* was as good as lost forever.

However, here they were again, creased into extra hideousness. Heroic little soul that she was, Hester, nevertheless, was not brave enough to don them at once. She warded off doom for at least a night, and spent even the next bright forenoon in the daintiness of skirts and ribbons. But at the time of day when any hour might bring the Old Man back from town, she set her teeth upon her trembling lips, hauled on the detestable trousers, and ruthlessly rammed and crammed all her cherished percale flounces into the horrible bagginess of them. With trembling fingers she triced up the suspender part, jammed some marbles into the yawning, rough-edged pockets, and then raced frantically out of the house, shrinking from the mirrors as if they had been fire-breathing dragons.

Seeing the Old Man afar, and braced to effort at sight of his laggard bearing, the Only Boy shook back the curls from her flaming cheeks, thrust her hands a-top of the marbles, sprawled her feet as far apart as she could and keep upon them at all, kicked open the garden gate, and swaggered down the road to meet him.

"Hello, Old Man! what's the good news from town?" she called affably.

His reply was the one for which she had planned. As his face cleared and his surprised laugh rang out, Hester forgot the ignominy of her apparel and hung chummily to his hand, her whole small being happily elate at her success.

"Just let's look at you; let's look at you!" he said, tricked into new laughter as he noted the remarkable lumps and bumps caused by the hidden flounces. "You look so *small*. And your feet beneath your trousers peep out no bigger than peanuts. And what do you call *this*?"

"Hair," said Hester unctuously, somewhat enjoying being a spectacle.

"I never knew you had so much. You're a French poodle, that's what you are. There's no 'Hester' about you now. You're Peter Poodle. I shall have to call you Pete for short. Suppose we don't go into the house, Pete? Suppose we go for a walk?"

"All right," said Hester, with just the proper nonchalance of a good comrade. Her heart gave one exultant leap to think that she had lured him from the lonely library, but immediately sank with its increasing load of private oppression. So her pretty name was gone now. She could better have stood anything but Pete. There had been a red-haired grocery boy once who threw a turnip at her. His name had been Pete. She did not like violence, nor red hair, nor grocery boys, nor turnips; and the accumulation of these dislikes was all bound up in the already sufficiently abominable *Pete*. Of a verity, it was a little bundle of suffering that trotted uncomplainingly beside the Old Man on his nerve-calming walk. And, as the Eternal Feminine braces itself on sacrifice, Hester was charmingly companionable. She evinced polite interest in the utterly uninteresting rows of things which were sprouting in the vegetable-garden, thoughtfully bending over—her hands on her trousered knees—to gaze long at humps in the earth, said to be beans; she shut her eyes and forced herself fiercely through a blackberry hedge in order to reach the river road—which when reached was sure to prove bullfroggy beyond endurance; she plunged pallidly but silently through a field of the snakiest kind of high grass; she even took into her trembling, revolting hand a cold and *boring* polliwog, which was offered as a treat; in a word, she accepted every horrible entertainment which the rude mind of man could conceive. But she earned her desired reward.

"This has been a pretty good afternoon, hasn't it, Pete?" asked the dear Old Man, as they came back through the garden gate. He was straight as a

tree, and his hat was shoved rakishly askew. To Hester's critical eye he looked an encouraging object. "We'll do this again!"

"Bet we will," said Hester heartily. Down, down, down, went her inward spirits. Hard as it was to begin to be an Only Boy, things looked as if the leaving off would be harder still. Were the frogs and polliwogs and the haunts of snakes to be her fate again?

They were. Not only the next afternoon, but succeeding afternoons—all afternoons. All her life. Wouldn't it soon be Christmas? Yet those wretched beans were only an inch or two high. And it was pretty blazing hot for the Christmas season. But, oh, how long it seemed since Hester had curled up on a pillow on the shady porch and dressed her dollies in the lace-trimmed copies of the finery which once had happily been her own.

Still, there was compensation. The Old Man's mind apparently kept in his head. True, he had many gloomy lapses; but Hester had a thrifty accumulation of surprises upon which she drew in time of need. The river road was growing apt to lead to a pool where Brother had been taught to swim. And the Old Man took to gazing too long.

Seeing this, Hester's eyes dilated with a touch of the old terror. But she knew what she should do. She yanked the Old Man's coat.

"If a feller'd give me a leg-up, I mos' b'lieve I could climb a tree," she said wistfully.

"Why, I'm your 'feller,' Pete, if you want to try," said the Old Man, pulling himself together. He looked around in vain for a trunk of good proportions. "But we can't climb willows, can we?"

"These aren't the only trees in the world," observed the Only Boy brazenly. "What's the matter with the orchard?"

"Nothing at all, I hope. Let's go there," said the Old Man promptly.

Then followed the hideous period of "shinning" up of trunks, all knubbly with bark, into perilous branches where there was nothing to see and much in the caterpillar line to fear.

How much better things looked from a distance. The baby apples, for instance. They were fair-sized children by now, and seen from below had a commendably edible appearance. But glared at dizzily from their own insecure quarters, they betrayed themselves to be given to the reprehensible habit of rotting where they hung and attracting wasps. Just like a wasp, to take to rot. What a nasty world this boy world was! But the orchard proved merrier than the swimming-pool, and the Old Man laughed again.

Sometimes, the Only Boy had the ill luck to precipitate trouble by a faulty mischance of her own. The matter of the hair is a case in point. Swinging head downward from a limb, she one time had the leisure to study approvingly her own shadow as it swayed beneath her. Pleased, she turned right-side up, dropped to her feet, thrust her hands in her trouser pockets, tilted her head engagingly, and said:

"I'm stuck on pants now; you couldn't tell me from a boy, could you?" She shook her tousled yellow mane from her face as she spoke.

"A boy with hair like that!" teased the Old Man. "I wouldn't own such a boy!"

No sooner had he said the words when he caught his breath shortly and turned abruptly away.

If he felt that badly about her hair, why, it had to go. There was no help for it. In actual anguish, blind and dumb to the sights and sounds of the summer happiness around her, the Only Boy fought herself into resignation. To lose them! Those floating yellow curls, where the blue bow poised like a lazy butterfly in autumn corn! Even now, acknowledging that the deed was as good as done, how was she actually to accomplish it? She had not the skill, let alone the nerve, to guide the shears on their awful way. And the village barber had a greed for coin, of which the Only Boy had none. Well, she might wheedle it out of the Old Man.

Desperately she chased in search of him. She found him in the barn. And he evidently was still annoyed about her

hair, for he was fighting loudly with the hired man. The hired man asked something in an equally loud tone, and the Old Man said it was none of his damp business. Why damp? Looking cursorily around, the Only Boy thought everything seemed dry, as usual. But damp must have been the right word, for the hired man kept quiet. The Only Boy stored the word away for possible future use. She might need it herself. Personally, the quarrel proved a god-send, because the Old Man answered her timid request for twenty-five cents by handing it right out. He didn't even seem to know she was there, and, without turning his head, kindly held the money into space.

The Only Boy captured it, and sped down the lane to the village. There is no need to dwell upon what happened *there*. The barber and she will never forget.

Nor did she *speed* on the homeward trip. Instead, she slunk miserably, and kept within the shade of the fence-hedges. By so doing she protected herself from another chance sight of her shadow in the road. The first had been enough. No longer did she silhouette like a chrysanthemum. She was merely a radish—small end up. And her head felt very trivial and empty.

But, arrived at the house, she gripped up enough courage from the inside lining of her overall pockets to enable her to stare her father coolly in the face.

"I've lost my lid," she remarked curtly. "What do you think of it?"

"Why, Pete," he gasped, "your beautiful hair! Who did it?"

"Barber. That's what he's for."

"Your mother never sent you!"

"Never. You can bet on that."

"It was your own doing?"

"Sure."

The Old Man's eyes flashed with a danger light, and the Only Boy groped in her memory for a talisman.

"What do you mean by doing such a thing?" he demanded.

Now was the time or never.

"None of your damp business," said the Only Boy affably. She was anx-

ious, too. But the anxiety proved unnecessary, for the Old Man burst into hopeless laughter. Not but what he regretted it on the instant, and took the Only Boy gently to task for her morals and manners; still, the laugh had come. A scolding under such preliminary circumstances is rather a cheery affair. The whole business was soon blown over. Yet it left its subtle influence. Did the Old Man faintly guess at last at Hester's comedy of life? Who knows? Nothing was ever said, but the resulting comradeship was nearer and dearer even than before.

There is no limit to the perfection it might have reached had not mother commenced inexorably to intrude. She certainly bothered the Old Man outrageously. Many a lovely ramble was brought to its untimely end by the Old Man looking at his watch and saying:

"Poor mother. I must go back and read to her, Pete."

"She's reading herself," Hester might announce in vain.

"I know. But she's lonely, all by herself in her room."

"Why don't she come with us if she wants us?"

All the gloom would be back in the Old Man's face, and he would answer sadly:

"She is not well, Pete."

"What's the matter with her?" once asked Hester, and somewhat callously. She, for one, felt that any woman who could manage Lizzie, the cook, and incidentally Hester, as firmly as mother did, could be in no imminent bodily danger.

"Mother's far from strong," said the Old Man, frowning with worry.

Denial in large quantity loomed on Hester's face.

"Far from strong!" she scoffed. "Wish you'd felt the spank she gave me to day. You'd know better, then."

Though the Old Man threw her the tribute of a sympathetic smile, he rubbed his fingers through his hair till it stood up like a bunch of grass, and kept on frowning.

Discouraged, Hester inclined to the belief that the world was a hard master.

No sooner had she rescued the Old Man from one mysterious misery than he fell into another—thereby indefinitely lengthening her hated period of boydom. For, of course, to keep the small amount of family joy circulating properly, she would have to remain for the nonce in pants and be boisterous to suit.

"Cut me a switch, Old Man," she said resignedly.

Receiving it, she strode ahead of him, her legs manfully apart, and whistled desperately while she switched with hypocritical viciousness at the asters as she passed. Not for worlds would she intentionally have harmed one gracious, nodding head. It was through sheer inadvertence and miscalculation of distance that she caused one royal bloom to shiver on its stalk and then fall fair face downward in the stifling dust. Hester's cheek went white.

"Well, you're a boy all right!" cried the Old Man, with wonder infused in his admiration.

So Hester stoically switched an onward way till a bend in the road shut the aster patch from sight. Then she pretended to see a lizard.

"Guess I'll go after that wriggler," she announced. "You keep on, Old Man, and I'll catch up."

Running back to the scene of her unfortunate cut, she knelt in the dust, picked up the severed flower, rocked it pityingly in her arms, and laid her tender lips upon it.

"Oh, my child, my child—my little killed baby," she whispered, while the quick tears dropped. "I never meant to do it; never, never. Oh, my pansy-colored daisy; oh, my aster child, that I made to die!"

Kissing it chokingly, she laid it in a crotch of the plant where it belonged, and twisted in beside it one of its living sisters to be a comfort and companion. Then she rubbed her tears away and hurried back to the Old Man.

"Did you get it?" he asked.

"Get what?" demanded Hester, startled.

"Your lizard."

"Nope," said the Only Boy indifferently.

Since the open held such perils, Hester was not quite sorry when the coming of cold weather shortened the walks abroad and kept them more in the house.

But it was a dreary winter—the Old Man needed such a lot of boy to keep him decently cheerful. Hester climbed so many chairs, and sat so much astride the sofa back, and slid so horribly often down the banisters, that the overalls wore out and new ones were purchased—tougher ones to suit her fancied need. Her poor, torn, tired spirit fairly bled at sight of them, but she plunged within them, and whistled hard to keep the tears back. One can't cry and whistle, too.

It was firmly her impression by now that she would never be a girl again. The dollies were in the attic—a veritable north pole in winter, so that she never even visited them. The kittens had grown, unpetted, to cats, and had been distributed among good Christian homes. There came an eternity of skating and sledding, cold and sniffly joys at best.

Then the miracle of leaves came round again, and overnight the violets purpled suddenly in the grass. One might almost be happy again—if one could be a girl—one's hair was getting fuzzy, too, and had to be persistently wetted to preserve the meager appearance proper to a boy. Rumble it, and it would curl deliciously—could one be a girl. Which, of course, one couldn't. For the time of polliwogs and kindred abominations would soon be round.

Hester took it philosophically when her father again appeared before her in a straw hat.

"Why, sure, Old Man; tramps, isn't it? I'm ready."

"Not this time, Pete. I have to take a trip for the firm. I'll be gone all night. But I'll be back to-morrow. You won't let mother get sick while I'm gone, will you?"

"I don't think I could stop her if she starts, but I'll try," said Hester dubiously.

"That's right. Be mother's little man while father's gone. Good-by."

"Good-by."

Hester apathetically accepted manhood. Father's Only Boy and mother's Little Man. It was a frightful set out.

With the Old Man absent, Hester spent the loneliest of afternoons. Nobody gave her any attention. Mother got it all. Night came uneventfully and everybody went to sleep. The commotion did not happen till next day, but there was plenty of it when it came. Mixed up with it were doctors and nurses and hot water and medicine. Mother had done just what she had been requested not to do.

After hours of aimlessness, when quiet had somewhat been restored, folks tardily remembered Hester's existence. Lizzie, the cook, came to her. Lizzie was all broad smile and excitement. Kneeling on the floor, she hissingly whispered into Hester's ticklish ear a tidings of apparent mightiness.

"Is that so?" observed Hester politely, striving to cloak her indifference, and rubbing her ear. But, as she dwelt upon it, the situation held out certain grand possibilities. So she pushed inquiry:

"Is he going to stay?"

"May the howly saints grant ut! Av coorse he's go'n' to stay."

"Oh!" said Hester.

Again she ruminated. Then pointed-ly:

"Lizzie, is he the Old Man's?"

"Will you list' to thot now! The child it is! Av coorse he's the Ould Man's."

"Oh!" said Hester again.

"An don't ye want to coom up-stair wit' Lizzie, darlin', an' see?"

"No," said Hester decidedly. "I'm going to be busy."

And busy she certainly became. The details of her activity would take too long to specify. Briefly, she put her overalls in the kitchen fire—the room was desirably empty at the time—she dumped tops, whips, balls, marbles, and kites in the wood-box; she rumbled her hair to curls and crowned them with the bluest and biggest of bows; she

went the reckless length of her Sunday dress to make a proper toilet; she gathered her dolls and dishes and toy table and rocking-chair into one glorious bunch, and, sitting down with her favorite child in her arms, she reveled in recovered girlhood, singing a soft lullaby so devotionally that its melody rose like a hymn of praise and thanksgiving.

A shadow thrown across her small tea-table caused her to look up. There stood her young father, evidently just returned from his brief trip, his suitcase in his hand, his hat shoved back from his rather tired face, and on his lips the smile that Hester knew to be the fruit of her past industry.

"Hello, Pete!" he said. "How are you?"

"I'm Hester, and I'm pretty well."

"How's things?"

"Pretty well."

"How's mother?"

"Pretty well."

"Where is she?"

"Up-stairs, I guess."

"You're not very talkative. Anything wrong?"

"Nothing. Only I'm so nice and busy. I'm having a party."

"So I see. And dolls, too! Well, I declare!" Then in mock tragedy he cried: "Dear me, you're a little girl again! A little girl! Have I lost my boy?"

At this bare possibility, unlikely though it was, Hester looked up startled. Then her good sense came to her rescue, and she said reassuringly:

"Why, he can't be lost yet. He's only just come."

"Who has?"

"Your boy. He's up-stairs. With mama. They're both in bed. So Lizzie says."

"What!"

After the explosive word, Hester was at liberty to play party again, for she was alone.

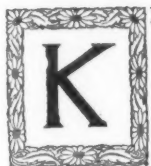
Quietly but with consuming swiftness the Old Man was bounding up-stairs three steps at a time.

And the hymnal lullaby sounded anew.



The CHANGING YEARS

By Joseph C. Lincoln



KETURAH BANGS sat in the plush rocker with the squeaky, patent springs. All the window-shades but one were drawn down, and all the window-blinds but one were tightly closed. Therefore, the drawing-room was shrouded in a dusky twilight, very soothing to Keturah's feelings.

Effie Tidditt, the good-looking maid servant, was dusting the drawing-room. Plebeian dwellers in Trumet called such apartments "parlors," or "front rooms," just as they called maid servants "hired help"; but Miss Keturah was distinctly not plebeian.

"Effie," said Keturah, with a sigh, "do you know what day this is?"

"Friday, ma'am, ain't it?" replied Effie, whirling the dust-cloth amid the sea-shells on the what-not.

"Yes, it's Friday. But I mean the day of the month. It's the ninth of February. Just twenty-two years and two months ago to-day, lacking a week. And I dreamed about him last night."

"I want to know!" Effie was politely but not enthusiastically interested. Miss Bangs "dreamed about him" so frequently that the announcement lacked novelty.

"Yes, I saw him as plain as I see you now." This was not very plain, for the what-not was in the darkest corner of the drawing-room. "He seemed to come to me, slim and handsome, with his hair curling on his forehead and his eyes looking at me just as they did

when he shut the door for the last time and went away. He was so distinguished-looking. Not like common men at all. Oh, dear! I don't know why I dream about him so; seems as if there must be a meaning to it all."

"P'raps he'll come back to you some day, ma'am. They always come back in stories. I was reading only last night in the *Comforter* how Lord Amory come back to Celestine. She'd give him up for dead, and was workin' in a soup-factory. And the man that owned the factory, a dreadful kind of man he was, he kept pesterin' her to run off with him. And just as she and her blind pa had got down to the last crust of bread—not a meal's vittles in the house—a beautiful team drove up to the factory door, and 'twas Lord Amory. He wa'n't a lord when he went away, but—"

"Ef-fie!" Miss Bangs' tone expressed dignified disapproval. "Be careful of that wax fruit. I noticed a nick in one of the pomegranates last Sunday, when the minister"—Keturah blushed a little—"was here. No, I'm afraid it's only in stories that they come back. Let it be a warning to you. Never, when you're keeping company with a young man—and you will some day, because you're a real passable girl when you're dressed up, in spite of you're having had no advantages—never allow a little disagreement to come between you and him as I did with Lot. Well, I must be going to the vestry. Does my belt set right? I do love a trim waist-line."

She stood in the light from the window while Effie made inspection. The hair lay smooth; very, very smooth. The belt and waist-line were pronounced perfect. Keturah prided herself on her waist; it was so aristocratically slender. In fact, she was aristocratically, not to say severely, slender from head to heel. A marked contrast to Effie, who, having been raised in Woodchuck Hollow, and lacking Boston training, wore her hair in crimps and ran to generous proportions and curves.

Miss Bangs went out and shut the door. A few minutes later Effie saw her plain black hat and snug black jacket moving past the front window.

It had snowed in the night, and the little Bangs house and yard were spotlessly white. Only two lines of foot-prints broke the expanse of whiteness. The milkman had come and gone. So to Miss Keturah's heart a man had once come—and gone. But his foot-prints were still there, or so Keturah loved to believe.

Miss Bangs had not always lived in Trumet. Up to the time when she was twenty-three her home had been in Falmouth. There, as a girl of eighteen, she had met Lot Berry, a young clerk in a New Bedford ship-chandler's store. They "kept company," "courted," and were engaged. Then came the quarrel, foolish and trivial, of course. Lot went away, foremost hand on a whaler, it was reported, and never came back. Keturah did not marry. When her father died she went to Boston to keep house for two elderly ladies, relatives, of blue blood and small fortunes, on Shawmut Avenue. There she learned of drawing-rooms, and libraries, and the ways of the aristocracy. When, years later, one of the old ladies died and the household was broken up, Keturah, with a small legacy, came to Trumet. She bought a house, hired Effie, joined the orthodox church, and settled down. She was the village "old maid," intensely select, eminently proper, and very, very churchy. Incidentally, she was the right-hand woman of the new bachelor minister, who people

said meant—but there! gossip should not be repeated.

Left alone in the drawing-room, Miss Tidditt went on with her dusting. She finished with the what-not and turned to the walnut center-table.

"Hello!" she said to herself—talking to herself was one of Effie's plebeian habits—"Miss Keturah's forgot her handkerchief. I hope she's got a spare one along. And what's this?"

It was a faded card photograph of a young man. A young man, slim, with thick, dark hair, elaborately parted, and with a curl plastered upon each side of his forehead. On the back of the photograph, in faded ink, was written: "Keturah from Lot. January 12, 18—."

"Humph!" mused Miss Tidditt. "She must have been dreamin' about him sure enough, if she fetched this down-stairs. I better put it out of sight. She'd have a fit if she knew she'd left it here."

She put the photograph on the mantel, set the alabaster candlestick upon it, and returned to the center-table. Then she heard a knock at the side door, the door opening from the back porch into the dining-room. She dropped the duster, patted her hair at the sides, glanced into the gilt-framed mirror, and hurried to answer the knock. The grocer's young man always came to that door. Strange to say, he was most likely to come when Miss Bangs had gone down-town.

But the person on the back porch was not the grocer's young man. He was a portly individual, of middle age, and a stranger. More than that, it was clear that he came from a distance. Natives of Trumet and its vicinity did not wear shiny silk hats nor fur-lined overcoats. Neither did they smoke fat cigars with gold bands about the middle.

"Mornin'," said the stranger, touching the brim of the silk hat with the finger of a brand-new kid glove. "Does a lady by the name of Bangs live here?"

"Yes, sir," replied Effie. "That is, there is a Bangs livin' here. Squire Benijah Bangs' place is up on the hill."

"It ain't the squire I'm lookin' for," said the stout man. "Does a Miss Keturah Bangs live here?"

"Yes, sir; she does."

The stranger stared at her; stared long and fixedly. "You ain't her?" he began. "No, course you ain't. Is she in?"

"No, sir; she ain't. And I don't believe she'd want to buy nothin' if she was."

"Buy anything? Who said she did?"

"Well, I didn't know. She's dreadful down on peddlers."

"Peddlers be—— See here; do I look like a peddler? Will she be in soon?"

"I don't know. That is, I guess likely she will be. Are you a minister?"

The stout man gasped. He looked down at his feet, craned his neck to get a view of the back of the gorgeous overcoat, and took off the shiny hat and looked at that. "Say, girl," he observed, at length, "what's the matter with me, anyhow? Is my rigging snarled, or are you crazy? A parson!" He snorted in disgust. "You'll be taking me for a missionary next."

"Well, I didn't know."

"All right. I'll forgive you this time."

He stepped across the threshold. "Guess I'll come in and wait. How is Keturah—Miss Bangs? Health pretty good?"

Effie was puzzled. She intimated that her employer was very well.

"Are you a relative of hers?" she asked suspiciously. The peddler idea had not wholly fled. No peddler whom she had seen dressed like this person, but you couldn't always tell.

"Not a relation exactly," replied the man, removing the silk hat and unfastening the frogs of the overcoat. "I'm a friend—that is, I'm a friend of a man who used to be a friend of hers. She lived in Falmouth at one time, and I knew her there."

Miss Tidditt's eyes opened wide. "Falmouth?" she repeated. "Land sakes! you don't tell me! Walk right into the front room, Mister—Mister—— What did you say your name was?"

"I didn't. It's—er—Jones. John Jones. John T. Jones, if you want to know. What's the matter? Anything?"

Effie sighed in disappointment. "No, sir," she said, leading the way to the drawing-room. "When you said Falmouth I thought—I hoped—but never mind. Set down, Mr. Jones. Shall I—— Why, you're smokin'!"

"You bet!" Mr. Jones said it enthusiastically, and sank into the plush rocker. He threw open the fur-lined coat, disclosing a lively checked business suit and a crimson necktie adorned with a glittering diamond scarf-pin. Removing one of the kid gloves, he revealed a big red hand with a showy ring on the finger.

"I generally am smokin'," he observed cheerfully, "though where I come from we ain't in the habit of lightin' cigars like this every day. Cost twenty cents apiece by the box, this kind does. You're a nice-lookin' girl," he added, eying Effie admiringly. "What's your name?"

Effie gave her name, in an absent-minded way. She was divided between admiration of Mr. Jones' raiment—he was dressed just like Lord Amory in the *Home Comforter* picture—and horror of the cigar.

"I don't know as Miss Keturah would like to have you smoke in here," she ventured. "She's terrible down on tobacco."

"Sho!" Mr. Jones seemed troubled. He took the cigar from his mouth and regarded it thoughtfully. "Must have changed her mind since I knew her. Why, her old man, up in Falmouth, used to smoke like a tin lantern. Humph! Well, I s'pose I can wait."

He knocked the ashes from the twenty-cent weed into the cocoanut-shell basket on the center-table, and laid the remnant of the cigar regretfully on the piece of looking-glass in the cover of the photograph-album. "Sho!" he said again. "She don't like tobacco, hey?"

"No, sir. Mr. Jones, when you was in Falmouth, did you used to know a man named Lot Berry?"

The visitor jumped. In the beam of

light from the window his bald head sparkled and shone.

"What! Who?" he demanded.

"Lot Berry. Miss Keturah's young man; the one she kept company with. When you first said where you come from I thought you might be him. She and me have been expectin' he'd come back some time. That is, I've been expectin' and she's been hopin'!"

"You have, hey?" Mr. Jones wiped his forehead with a figured silk handkerchief. "Lot Berry? Lot? Let's see. Seems to me I do remember him. Big, fleshy feller, rather light-complected and——"

"No, indeed! He was slim and dark and curly-haired. Here's his picture. Want to see it?"

Mr. Jones took the photograph and stared at it long and gravely. He turned it over and read the inscription on the back.

"Humph!" he said. "Lord! what a meek-lookin' little pill. Look at them sissy spit-curls. And he ain't got meat enough on him to bait a cod-hook."

"I think he's real handsome," vowed Effie indignantly. "And Miss Keturah does, too. She talks about him and his curls and his aristocratic ways all the time. She says it's genteel to be slim. She's lived in Boston with the big bugs, and she knows."

But Mr. Jones didn't hear her. He was regarding the photograph.

"Twenty odd years ago, that was," he observed. "Well, twenty years gives a feller time for improvement. He can get rid of curls and bones in that time. Yes, and he can get rid of meekness, too; that's a mercy."

"Miss Keturah likes what you call meekness. She says Mr. Berry was so retiring and gentlemanly. She likes that 'most as well as she does slimness."

"Does, hey? That's funny. I don't. I don't want a wife that's meek, not by a jugful. I used to say to the boys on the plantation: 'Fellers,' I used to say, 'some of these days when I've made my pile, I'm goin' back to God's country to be married. And then I'm goin' to tog my wife out; don't say a word!

Sealskin sack down to her heels, thumb-nail diamonds in her ears, bonnet with ostrich feathers on it. That's what! Give me,' I used to say, 'a woman that folks turn 'round to look at when she passes 'em on the street.' That's what I used to say."

He paused, apparently in a reminiscent muse. Then he chuckled.

"Queer," he continued, "that Keturah should like skinny, bashful folks. She ain't that way herself. Plump, lively girl, she was, something like you, only not quite so much of her. Dressed pretty and gay. Full of tricks and di-does. Always dancin', and——"

"Miss Keturah!" Effie very nearly shrieked. "Miss Keturah full of tricks and cuttin' up! And plump! And dancin'! Why, she's as thin—I mean slim, as can be, and always wears black; and as for dancin'—why, she thinks it's the invention of the Old Boy himself. She's more down on dancin' than she is on showy clothes and liquor and tobacco, if that's possible. Why, one time she——"

Mr. Jones interrupted her. He was on his feet now and his fat face was greatly agitated.

"Hold on, there!" he shouted. "There must be some mistake. This can't be the Keturah Bangs I used to know. It can't be. She——"

The back door opened and closed. Effie's pretty face lit up.

"Here she is now," she cried, running toward the library. "Now you can see for yourself."

"Come back!" yelled Mr. Jones, grabbing at her sleeve. "Come back here, for Heaven's sake! Do you hear? Come back!"

But Effie wouldn't come back. She ran to the dining-room, where her mistress was removing her rubbers on the braided rag mat.

"Oh, Miss Keturah!" she cried: "there's a man to see you. And he's a perfect gentleman. Dressed — and jewels—oh, my! And he knew Lot Berry, and——"

"What?" Miss Bangs turned pale.

"Yes'm. He did. And—— Oh, here he is!"

Mr. Jones stood in the doorway. The cheery dining-room was bright with sunlight. He looked at Miss Bangs and she at him. It was so still that one could have heard the clock tick. Then——

"Lord almighty! Keturah!" ejaculated John T. Jones.

"Oh! oh!" cried Keturah faintly. "Lot!" And sank in a heap upon the braided mat.

So, just as Lord Amory came back to his Celestine, after many years, had Lot come back to his Keturah. He told his story that noon at the dinner-table, while Miss Bangs very nearly forgot to be dignified, and Effie allowed her apple pie to burn to charcoal in the kitchen oven.

He had been almost everywhere in those twenty-two years. To the arctic seas on whaling voyages, to China, to England and France and Italy, to Constantinople and the Pacific islands. Finally he had drifted to South America and up the Amazon, where he and two companions had acquired a rubber plantation and had, in the course of time, grown wealthy.

"But I never forgot you, Kitty," he declared. "Lord love you, I always swore to find you some day, when I'd made my lucky. And I never got married, neither. Bill and Ike, my two partners, they took up with a couple of liver-colored native girls and was happy. But not me; no, sir! When they used to say to me: 'Lot, why in thunder don't you get a woman?' I used to say: 'No, sir! I ain't got nothin' against Injuns, they make good wives, but——'"

"Lot!" Miss Keturah's tone expressed horrified disgust.

"Well, all right. Anyhow, five years ago I come to the States to hunt you up. Went to Falmouth; you'd cleared out for Boston. Went to Boston; couldn't find you there. Put ads in the papers——"

"I never read the newspapers. They're so vulgar. I take the *Christian Herald*, but——"

"Christmas! I never thought of ad-

vertisin' in *that*. Well, I give it up, thinkin' you'd got another man and forgot yours truly. But this year I tried again. When I struck New York one of the first fellers I run into was Peters, your cousin."

"My cousin Benjamin. Yes, I know."

"Nosey Peters, we used to call him. And when old Nosey says that you're livin' in Trumet and ain't married, I fetched a yell that scared the bar—the hotel man 'most to death, bolted for the train, and here I am. And, Kitty, I've got money to sell. We'll see Paris, and Monte Carlo, and——"

"Lot! *Please* don't. Effie, run along out to the kitchen, there's a good girl."

After dinner in the drawing-room, Mr. Berry went on with his rhapsodies concerning the things they were to see and the sensations they would cause on the boulevards. The "sealskin sack to the heels," the diamond ear-drops, and all the rest of his dreams were exploited at length. Then he produced a package, carefully wrapped in white paper, and from it took a diamond ring, a solitaire that made even the headlight in his own shirt-bosom a pale Christmas tree candle in comparison.

"That's for you, Kitty," he declared. "That's the engagement ring. I paid fifteen hundred dollars for that sparkler."

Miss Keturah glanced at the "sparkler" and shuddered. Then she said slowly but with decision: "Lot, how do you know that I wish to marry you, after all these years?"

"*Hey?*" Mr. Berry's mouth opened in astonishment. "Don't want to marry me? Why, Effie told me you dreamed about me and—land knows what."

"Yes, I've dreamed about you. But in my dreams you were as you used to be. You were slim and pale, and you—you had your hair——"

"Sufferin'! You wouldn't want me to wear spit-curls again, would you?"

"Don't! How awfully rough you speak. No, Lot, maybe I might forget the curls and the rest. But *I* have changed as well as you."

"I know, but I don't care for good

looks. Good looks ain't all there is, not by——"

"Well, I hope I'm not altogether a sight, even now." Keturah's tone was, for her, rather sharp. "No, I don't mean my looks. But I have lived in the city. I know how gentlefolks ought to behave. You have been in the woods with the—with your Indians and the rest. Of course, I make allowances, still—Lot, are you *sure* you want to marry me?"

"Sure? What do you think I come back here for?"

"Very well, then. You know that you weren't forgotten by me. But, Lot, if I marry you—some time or other—you must be willing to change, for my sake. You mustn't dress so loud——"

"Lord! Why, I got myself up regardless just for this trip, to please you. I says to the tailor, says I: 'Blame the expense! Tog me up. Spread yourself. I'm game, and——'"

"I know. But I cannot abide conspicuous clothes. And, although I take your ring, you mustn't expect me to wear it—not now, if ever. You must learn to speak lower, and not use slang, and—in short, let me make you a gentleman. And don't, please don't, mention your dreadful associates, or Paris, or—horrors! Monte Carlo."

Mr. Berry looked very much as if he had been struck by a typhoon. He sat silent, turning the slighted engagement ring about in his fingers. At length he said, with a sigh:

"Well, Kitty, I'll try. It's kind of an upset for me, you understand, but I'll do my durnest to please you."

"Very well. And please don't call me Kitty before folks. We're too old for that. Oh, Lot! the years have changed us both so. We must both make allowances for each other. We'll try, won't we?"

It was agreed—Miss Keturah suggested it—that Lot was not to appear in Trumet in his real character of returned lover. He was to be her cousin—a white lie that caused her some twinges of conscience. He was to be on trial for a month. Then, if he promised well, they were to be married; but

the ceremony must be private and very simple. And until the month was up the whole affair was to be a dead secret. Meanwhile Effie, whose trustworthiness had been proved, was to be their only confident.

Mr. Berry that evening sought the Bay View House, his stopping-place in Trumet, with a sorrowful countenance.

"Christmas!" he exclaimed, under his breath; "it's goin' to be a tug. I 'most wish—— But there! She's waited for me all this time, and I've got to do it, for her sake."

And Miss Keturah, in tears before her mirror, sobbed: "Oh, dear! How can I? How can I? But he's come back to me, and he's worked for me all these years. It's my duty to him, in common charity. But, oh, how *can* I?"

Next day cousin Lot came to dinner, attired in plain, ready-made clothes and strangely quiet. Keturah welcomed him in dignified calm. The probation period had begun.

In a fortnight the change was even more manifest. Lot was meek and dutiful. He even went to church on Sunday, and, though he did fall asleep and snore, he awoke when Miss Bangs indignantly pinched him, and sat, red-faced and contrite, through the remainder of the service.

It was to Effie that he went for consolation. The admiring and pretty Miss Tidditt came to be his bosom friend and confidante. He grew to like her more and more. She doted on his yarns of foreign countries, and it was plain that to her he was still the "perfect gentleman." After the minister, Mr. Chase, made his weekly visit, Lot sought out Effie in the kitchen and demanded:

"What's that hatchet-faced gospel shark doin' 'round here, anyway? What right's he got to be eatin' Keturah's grub?"

"Why!" exclaimed the maid servant, "he's Miss Keturah's best friend. He thinks the world of her, and she does of him."

"She does? You don't mean to say she *likes* that—that livin' skeleton?"

"Likes him? You bet she does. Why, he comes to tea once a week, and some-

times oftener. He says she's the only kindred spirit he's got in the congregation. He's had Boston bringin' up, same as her. And she used to say that he was her ideal man—next to you, of course. I didn't know but she'd marry him, one time."

At the end of the month the rubber-grower's apparent reformation had so progressed that the marriage was a certainty. On the following Thursday they were to go to the orthodox minister in Wellmouth and be made man and wife. Keturah said she preferred not to go to Mr. Chase, and Lot didn't urge it. After the ceremony the whole story was to be made public. Miss Bangs cried again that night, in the solitude of her chamber. And, in his room at the hotel, Mr. Berry sat in gloomy reflection.

On Tuesday afternoon Lot dropped in at the Bangs house, to find the drawing-room filled with ladies. Beside himself, the Reverend Mr. Chase was the only male present.

"Here's cousin Lot," remarked Miss Bangs, with enthusiasm. "He's had experience with the heathen right where the missionaries are. Do tell us about some of the missionaries you've met, cousin. Please do."

The "please do" was echoed by every one except the minister. Mr. Chase and the new cousin were *not* kindred spirits.

The word "missionary" hit Mr. Berry upon his sorest spot, a spot hitherto untouched by Keturah's questions.

"Missionaries!" he exclaimed. "Yes, I'll tell you about 'em. I've met enough to last *me* through, blast 'em! Of all the——"

He proceeded to give his opinion of missionaries, an opinion backed by long experience. They were lazy; they were stuck-up; they spoiled the Indians as workers. He gave instances, winding up with:

"Me and my partners have sworn to tar and feather the next missionary that heaves in sight of our place. Everlastin' mischief-makers! Better enough site stay to home and convert the other old women. That's where they belong."

Mr. Chase was white and trembling. The circle of ladies were nervously pretending to sew, fidgeting in their chairs. Keturah looked at her guests, began to speak, and then burst into tears.

Mr. Berry fled to the kitchen. "What have I done?" he demanded of Effie. She asked for particulars, and he gave them.

"My soul and body!" exclaimed Miss Tidditt. "That was a meeting of the Foreign Mission Society. Miss Keturah's the secretary."

"God sakes!" remarked the hapless Lot, with emphasis. "That settles it!" Then he departed, utterly crushed.

Next day he did not come near the Bangs house. Mr. Chase came, however, and spent an hour with his pet parishioner. After dinner, of which Keturah ate little, that lady appeared in the dining-room, dressed for the street. She had a satchel in her hand.

"Effie," she said, "I'm going out. I sha'n't be home to tea. Here's Mr. Berry's gloves, that I've been mending for him. I'll leave 'em on the chest of drawers, here. Please give 'em to him when he comes."

She went out, shutting off all questions with the bang of the door.

That evening, as Effie sat alone in the kitchen, there came a light tap on the window-pane. She opened the door. It was raining, but there stood Lot Berry, wearing the fur-lined overcoat and the silk hat. He was carrying a valise.

"Where is she?" he demanded, in an anxious whisper.

"She's gone out. She won't be home till late, I guess. Won't you come in? You're soakin' wet."

Mr. Berry came in. He took off the dripping silk hat and deposited it on top of the hot cook-stove, whence Effie rescued it just in time.

"Effie," cried Lot, in great agitation, "I'm goin' away to-night."

"Goin' away!"

"Yes, sir; I'm goin' to clear out. My Lord!" he declared, in tremendous excitement, "I can't stand it no longer. I was to get the license to-night and be

married to-morrow, but I can't—I'm goin' to quit on the eight-o'clock train."

"But Miss Keturah——"

"I know. *Don't* I know! Poor thing! I'm treatin' her like a low-down rascal, but it's got to be. It's all a mistake, anyhow. I ain't fit for her. I ain't aristocratic. I ain't had no Boston trainin'. I ain't no missionary. Drat 'em, I hate the breed, and shall till I die. No, *sir!* you tell her what I've said, and that I've gone. I didn't have the spunk to tell her myself, so you do it for me, will you, please? Tell her to forget me for good and all."

Miss Tidditt's eyes were like saucers. And her usually red cheeks were white.

"Oh, Effie," panted Lot distressfully, "you don't know what I've been through this last month. I hate to go. I hate to leave *you*. You're a nice girl. You're my *idea* of a girl. Why, if 'twas you, I could plan for Paris and all that. And how I used to plan it, poor fool that I was. I'd see us walkin' together down them boulevards at night, with the lamps a-shinin', same as I've really seen 'em, time and time again. And the bands a-playin' and the folks a-laughin' and the shows goin' on——"

Effie clasped his hands. Her black eyes sparkled.

"Mustn't it be *lovely!*" she gasped.

"That's it! *You'd* appreciate it. If 'twas you, now, what a time we'd have, hey? You with that long sealskin and the diamonds and jewelry I'd give you. You'd look fine in 'em, too. Not like a clothes-pin. And me all dressed up to beat the cars and with money in my pocket. Nothin' we couldn't have; nothin' too dear for us to buy. And we'd see it all, you and me—— What are you cryin' about?"

"Great land!" Mr. Berry's face shone with a brand-new idea. "You ain't—you can't be cryin' about *me*? You don't care nothin' for *me*, do you?"

But Effie only sobbed.

"Land of love, Effie! *Do* you care? Would you go to Paris with me? You shall have the sealskin, and all the rest. I like you. I like you a heap. Why—

why, one reason I couldn't bring myself to marry Keturah was because I'd come to like you so. Come on! I mean it. Say the word, and I'll go after that license this minute, and we'll be married right off. Christmas! *Do* you care, Effie? Would you be willin' to come with an old baldy like me? Would you, now?"

Miss Tidditt raised her head.

"Oh, *wouldn't* I!" she breathed ecstatically.

Mr. Berry waved both arms. "Hooray!" he shouted. "It's a go."

The bewildered girl glanced about the room. "Oh, no," she stammered, "we mustn't. 'Twouldn't be right. I——"

She paused. Her eyes were fixed upon the gloves lying on the chest of drawers.

"Oh, no!" she cried again, but firmly. "No, I couldn't. 'Twouldn't be right; when she's been so kind and all. No! *no!* See; there's your gloves, Mr. Berry. She mended 'em and left 'em for you."

Lot's castle in the air tumbled to pieces. After a minute he gloomily took up the gloves.

"No," he sighed. "I was crazy, I guess. 'Twouldn't be right, nor decent to *her*. Well, Effie, I'll write to you, and perhaps some day—— What's this?"

He had begun to pull on the right-hand glove. Something was in one of the fingers. He shook it out. There fell upon the table the solitaire, the engagement ring he had brought to Miss Keturah.

"Why!" cried Effie. "It's her beautiful ring! What——"

"Hold on," said Mr. Berry; "there's something else. Paper, ain't it?"

It was a folded slip of paper—a note. He unfolded it and held it to the light. Then he read the following aloud:

DEAR LOT: I don't know what you will think of me, or how to say it. But I must. I can't marry you. I simply *can't*. You're a good man in your way, but our ways are so different. We never should be happy. I know. I've tried to bear with you, but that dreadful missionary business was the last

straw. I meant to tell you this to-day, but you didn't call, and I was too cowardly to send for you. I haven't gone out to tea. I've run away. I've gone to visit a friend of mine out of town. I sha'n't be back for a week. There is no use waiting for me. I can *never* marry you. Forgive me, please, and do forget me. I'm *so* sorry for you.

Your broken-hearted KETURAH.

P. S. There is something else, and I must tell you. Mr. Chase proposed to me to-day, and I think—yes, I feel that I shall accept him.

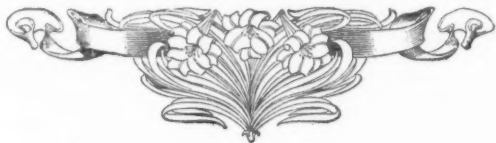
There was silence for a full minute, after the reading of the astounding note. Then Lot gave a triumphant whoop and made a dive for his hat.

"Where are you goin'?" cried Effie wildly.

Mr. Berry paused in the doorway. "I'm goin' to the town clerk's after that license," he shouted. "You get ready. We'll be married in less than half an hour."

The door banged. Effie ran and opened it. She peered after her flying lover. He was already half-way to the gate, splashing heedlessly through the puddles.

The warm rain was washing away the snow. The footprints had entirely disappeared.



THE WILES O' WOMEN

LITTLE laughin', teasin' Nora!
Well she knows that I adore her.
Whin she coaxes: "Buy me that.
Arrah, don't be stingy, Pat!"
Sure, her roguish eye's so blue,
What's a simple man to do?

Little dimpled, cunnin' Nora!
Small the use 'tis to implore her:
"Have a care, Acushla! Say,
What if there's a rainy day?"
"Oh," sez she, "the coat you buy
Whin it rains will kape me dhry!"

Little darlin', cuddlin' Nora!
Sure, I'd lay me life down for her;
And I'm feared if I don't spile her
Some spalpeen would soon beguile her.
"G'wan," she sez, sez she, "ye know,
Patsy, you're me only beau!"

Little wheedlin', petted Nora!
Faith, I never can deplore her
Spendin' all me wages while
She'll reward me wid her smile.
Blarney, 'tis? Well, I know that,
But I'm just her foolish Pat!

ANNA MARBLE.



MONSIEUR

B. T. W. Hanshaw

MASSINGHAM pulled down the brim of his hat, the better to focus his vision—for the glare of the sun was intense and

the light on the sea hurt his eyes—and, leaning back with his shoulders squared against the rug-covered garden-seat, looked again.

"Who is she?" he asked, taking his chin between his thumb and forefinger and meditatively stroking it, his gaze fixed the while on the quiet figure under the one tree on the seaward side of the house, where the lawn stretched smoothly out to the cliff's edge and there broke abruptly against the background of glittering, far-reaching water.

"Who's who?" queried Mrs. Gamlingay, rising superior to the petty limitations of grammar, as they may—and often do—on whom Mammon has smiled to the extent of eight figures, and, thereby, given to the verb "to have," a power of condonation not possessed by any other verb in the language. "Oh! the girl with the book, you mean. She's Miss de Varsac, Norma's school friend. They were at the *Sacré Cœur* together for five years."

"De Varsac? She's French, then? Shouldn't have thought it. She has quite the look of an American girl."

"Her mother was American, which of course accounts for *that*," said Mrs. Gamlingay, changing the angle of her parasol so that its froth of chiffon and lace shaded Massingham as well as herself. "Sit a little more this way, Jack; I shouldn't like her to think we are noticing. She is very sweet and nice and

all that, you know, but——" An expressive shrug of the shoulders finished the sentence with amazing eloquence, and Massingham understood.

"Ah! I see," he said. "Slightly *déclassée*, eh? Especially as regards the standard of Newport. Poor little devil!"

"Jack!"

"Excuse me—it slipped out unconsciously, Aunt Fanny. I should have said 'poor little angel'—she certainly has the look of one. How did she come here? And what is her particular crime? Failure to come up to the Gold Standard, I suppose."

"Jack, don't be coarse! It seems to me that the West has taken considerable of the polish off you. I noticed it this morning when you arrived."

"Did you? Well, yes, it *has* kicked off a little of the unnecessary veneer. That's the mission of the West—more power to it! But to return to Miss de Varsac. Who is she, and what is she? And, being clearly not a member of the Aristocracy of Dollars, how comes it that you have her here?"

"You can't think that I am accountable for that? It was all Norma's doing. You know how she rules me, and how abominably democratic she is. And as for your remark about an Aristocracy of Dollars, allow me to say, please, that a peacock may be a peacock under all circumstances, but it is hardly an attractive bird when plucked, and should certainly *not* be on exhibition with its more fortunate kind. So, when Monsieur le Comte de Varsac lost his money——"

"She is the daughter of a French count, then? I thought there was something high-bred in the look of her."

"Or do you mean hybrid?"

"It doesn't matter. What about her father? How did he lose his money? Or did he have any to lose?"

"I believe so. He was a stock-broker, or something of that sort, and Wall Street cut into his fortune and never replaced the slice. His wife died shortly after, I've been told, and, finding himself left with a growing child on his hands, he shipped her over to Paris and placed her in the *Sacré Cœur* to be educated. His title, which, of course, means nothing here, meant a great deal there (they have such a ridiculous veneration for the families of the old régime, those French people), and the result was that *Athalie*—her name is *Athalie*, by the way—received quite as much consideration as the daughter of—well, anybody else. Ridiculous, isn't it?"

"Criminally so—from the standpoint of Newport. Only, the count couldn't have been reduced to absolute beggary, you know. It costs something to send one's daughter to the Sacred Heart and keep her there for five years. But no doubt it meant sacrifices, poor old dufer! Well, go on. What else?"

"Very little, fortunately—it is too hot to talk. She and Norma finished together, and I was weak enough—as the girl had to come back to her father's care—to allow myself to be persuaded into chaperoning her across the ocean. (I suppose I needn't say that that was Norma's doing?) Her father met us at the pier, and—that's all. I handed her over to him and came away instantly."

"Why? Wasn't he up to much, after all? Was it a case of his 'manners had not that repose which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere'?"

"Oh! I shouldn't like to say *that*. He was very polite, very well behaved, and all that sort of thing, but it was clearly out of the question to think of continuing the acquaintance. But you know what Norma is, and what putty I am in her hands. She *would* keep up a correspondence with the girl, and never let me have a moment's peace until I allowed her to invite her here for a week's stay."

"Good old Num!" said Massingham approvingly. "Don't mind if I light up, do you, Aunt Fanny? Haven't had a pull at my pipe since breakfast."

He drew it out from his pocket forthwith and proceeded to stuff the bowl, and with a shudder for the aroma which might possibly cling to her if the interview were prolonged, Mrs. Gamlingay rose and fled; going straightway across the lawn and round the angle of the house, to where the more orthodox members of the house-party she was entertaining were loudly applauding an exciting set of "doubles" on the tennis-court.

The pipe had fulfilled its mission. Massingham slid it back into his pocket and fell into the old occupation of staring across the level stretch of lawn at where the cliff's edge and the sea seemed to join, and the sunlight through the leaves of the big catalpa shed a greenish dusk over the white dress and drooped head of the girl with the book.

What followed was inevitable, for there is a thread of romance interwoven in the fabric of every man's soul, no matter how sordid—and Massingham's was not sordid by any means. The time, the place, the story he had heard, the lonely figure in the tree's shade, and the shine of the sunlight on the sea, all worked their own charm. He got up hurriedly and walked across the lawn, and a moment or so later he was standing under the tree and looking down into a pair of upraised brown eyes.

"May I introduce myself, Miss de Varsac?" he said, waving one hand in the direction of the distant tennis-court. "We seem so hopelessly out of it, you and I, we ought to sympathize with each other—on principle."

"Ought we? I don't feel that I need sympathy, myself, and I certainly don't need an introduction to know who you are—I've seen your photograph so many times. You are Mr. Massingham, Norma's cousin."

"Yes, I am," he admitted, rather superfluously, as he dropped into the place she made for him on the garden-bench with the air of a man who is used to have women make room for him. "Hot,

isn't it? I suppose that's the reason you aren't playing tennis, and don't, therefore, need my sympathy."

"Well, no, not exactly that," she answered, with a laugh—a soft, clear, unaffected laugh that was as free from artificiality as heaven's own blue. "Must I admit it? I haven't been asked, for one thing, and, for another, I have something more important here" tapping the book on her knee.

"What is it? Tennyson or a novel?"

"Neither. It's accounts"—opening it so that he could see the double row of closely crowded figures—"I have been over it all three times, and I can't make it amount to less than thirty-one dollars, no matter how I try."

"Is it necessary?"

"Oh, yes! very, very necessary"—the brown eyes growing suddenly serious. "Thirty-one dollars in one month is a great deal too much. I am afraid they did not teach me, at the convent, how to be a good housekeeper, and I am trying to see where and how I can cut down expenses when I go back to father. I can't let myself cost him too much, or I shall be a burden to him, you know. He didn't say so, but I saw the frightened look in his eyes when I showed him these accounts, and it makes me realize that I have been keeping house far too extravagantly."

Massingham said nothing. Here was a side-light upon the affairs of Monsieur le Comte, certainly. The girl's candor was refreshing, but it was appalling as well, in that it revealed a state of affairs far worse than his wildest imaginings.

"I cannot think what I can cut off, unless it be my piano," she went on, running her finger down the lines of figures and pausing at each doubtful item. "Was it not absurd of me to think that I must have a piano, and to hire one just because he did not say I must not? I will cut off the piano, that is certain. And then—— Don't you think I might dispense with this item of coffee and rolls every morning? It mounts up in a month's time—see!"

"Ye-es, I suppose it does," said Massingham, following her finger down the

line, and growing faint-hearted at what he suspected. "But people must breakfast, you know, and rolls and coffee strike me as being about the cheapest form. What will Monsieur de Varsac say if you invite him to do with less for his breakfast."

"Oh! he won't know. It is I alone who take *premier déjeuner*. Father never rises until noon. You see, he is at his club so late, and he is tired when he comes home."

The nerves about Massingham's mouth gave a queer little twitch, and he looked at her suddenly from the corners of his eyes.

"So Monsieur belongs to a club, does he? And he goes there how often?"

"Oh! every night, of course. It is his one pleasure, and I would not have him cut it off for worlds. You see, after my mother died and he sent me to Paris, it was so lonely for him that he was forced to do something to keep from dying of ennui. So, each night he went to his club for a quiet game of cards with his friends, until now it has become so much a matter of habit, he says, that he could not sleep without it."

Massingham felt something like the grip of a hand at his throat and the heat of fire about his temples. He looked down at her skirt. It was of white drill, and clearly home-made.

"Mightn't he try?" he suggested sententiously. "Propose it to him."

"Oh, no! not for the world. He'd do it instantly; indeed, there is nothing he would not sacrifice for me, Mr. Massingham. Think what he has done for me as it is. Think what I have cost him. I would do anything in the world rather than he should lose his one pleasure in life. And it is a pleasure to me, too; for, indeed, I am very proud of him when night comes and he puts on his evening clothes and goes off to his club looking ah! so fine and grand. It is almost like the old days come back, for I was not so young when the great crash came that I cannot remember the big house with the brilliant *salle à manger*, the sparkling table, with my mother in her pretty gown on one

side, my father in his evening clothes on the other; and behind their chairs the tall servants, smileless as images even when Nanine brought me in for my good-night kiss. Only, it is no longer anything like that. It is a wee little flat now on the top floor of an ugly building, and the stairs creak when one goes down them to the street. But it is home, and father is there, so nothing else matters."

"You are very fond of him, I see."

"Fond of him? How could I help being fond of him? He is the dearest and tenderest of fathers. Only think what it means, my being away from him even now, and he all alone. But he would have me accept the invitation. He said the change would do me good. And, indeed, I think it has; only that I feel rather 'out of it,' as you expressed it awhile ago. Mrs. Gamlingay's guests are all so very grand, and wear such beautiful clothes. I think I should feel a little lonely, too— if it isn't ungrateful to say so—were it not for Norma. She takes me boating and riding whenever there is a chance, and we *do* enjoy ourselves."

"Norma's a brick!" asseverated Massingham. "Look here, Miss de Varsac, may I be rude and inquire when the next boating expedition is likely to come off? Or haven't you made any arrangements for it as yet?"

"Oh, yes! We are going this morning. I'm waiting for her now. Look! there she is just coming out of the house. Ah! how I wish that father could be here to-day."

"So do I," said Massingham, his jaw setting squarely; then he lounged back in his seat and waited for his cousin to come up. But, although he said nothing, his mind's eye was filled with the picture of a selfish old reprobate stealing back in the gray of the morning, gorged with wine and in good or ill-spirits, as the luck of the cards decreed, to sneak into bed and sleep until noonday, while his child laid plans to dispense with her breakfast as a luxury no longer to be afforded.

"Look here, Num," he said, as Miss Gamlingay came up—rosy with health

and high spirits—and joined them. "I've invited myself, to become the working member of your boating parties in future. It's not safe, nor even proper, for you two girls to go out rowing without an escort."

"Jackey, you're a darling! If it wasn't superfluous, I'd reward you as you deserve. Even as it is, I took ten minutes longer than was absolutely necessary to pin on my hat. I suppose you are aware that it is ten minutes since you walked across the lawn and sat down under this tree."

"Hello! have you added the proclivities of Peeping-Tom to your many accomplishments? What do you think, Miss de Varsac?—this paragon of all the virtues has been playing the spy upon us."

"Jackey, don't be coarse!" mimicking Mrs. Gamlingay's petulant tone—"I really despair of you sometimes. Here's the boat-house key—go and get everything ready for us. And—Jackey!"

"Yes?"

"You might send to Huyler's and get me a ten-pound box of chocolates. I feel in my bones I've earned it—or shall have done when mother learns. Ten pounds, remember, Jackey; not an ounce less."

"Right you are," he answered, with a laugh. "Come along, girls. We can have three good hours of it before it's time to dress for dinner."

Then, sandwiching himself between them, he struck out in the direction of the stairway leading down to the water's edge, and in this way the friendship of Jack Massingham and Monsieur's daughter began.

It lasted, without break or interruption, for five whole days—which was rather long for him to devote himself to any girl—and then Massingham presented himself before his disapproving aunt with a demand that she write to Monsieur and ask to have Athalie's holiday extended.

"Tell him to let her have another week of it. He won't demur, I'll be sworn, for it will take the expense of supporting her off his hands and give

him more money to waste at the card-table, the hypocritical old cad!"

"Another week! I don't approve of it—I distinctly do *not* approve of it! Besides, people are talking—the way you dance attendance upon that girl, the preference you show for her society. Jack, if it should lead to anything serious I'd never forgive myself."

"Then begin by forgiving yourself at once," he said. "The girl's a poor, lonely, sweet little thing—a sort of rose dropped in your fine bed of hothouse tulips, Aunt Fanny, and as refreshing as a breath from the clover-fields blown down the hot, dry alleys of conventionality—but she is Monsieur de Varsac's daughter, and I don't aspire to the honor. Look here! You were right in cutting the acquaintance of that fellow—he's a cad of the first water. A selfish old Sybarite, who makes his child slave and drudge and do without things, so that he may belong to clubs and spend his nights in playing cards and gorging himself with wine and luxuries. And she doesn't suspect it, poor little thing! Give her another week, Aunt Fanny; it's the last she'll be likely to know for many a day, and he'll be glad enough to get her kept off his hands as long as possible, I'll be sworn."

So the letter was written, and, as Massingham had predicted, Monsieur readily accorded his sanction to the extension asked for; thanking Madame Gamlingay for the great honor she had shown his beloved child, assuring her of his most distinguished consideration, and that he was her humble but most appreciative debtor, Achille de Varsac.

"Achille; that was the chap with the tender heel, wasn't it?—my mythology is rusty," said Massingham, when his aunt showed him the letter. "Well, it's good to know that Monsieur has a tender spot somewhere, and we may as well be merciful, and let that poor little thing go on believing it's in his heart."

No rose, however sweet, may bloom forever; no sun, however bright, may shine beyond its allotted time. Came the end of the second week, and with it the end of Athalie's stay.

Massingham drove over to the station with Norma to see her off and to decently inter the corpse of another summer episode. But, somehow, when the time of parting came, there was a wrench about it, and his hand shook a little as he took hers, and noticed how she laughed and blushed, and would not—or could not—look him straight in the eyes as she used to do.

He had meant to say good-by to the rose and ride back to the tulip-field with the consciousness of a duty well done. But now—

"I shall be in New York some time next week, and you must let me have the privilege of calling," he said, holding fast to the fingers that showed such a desire to slip from his. "May I?"

"Indeed, yes!" she said, with a momentary flash of delight. "Father will be glad to meet you, and to thank you for your kindness to me. I should like you to know father, Mr. Massingham—there is no father like him in the world."

Massingham felt his ardor chill. The rose had unsheathed its thorn. He let her hand slip from his and courteously raised his hat.

"My respects to Monsieur," he said. "Good-by."

And then the train was off, and the episode was over, indeed.

"Look here, Num," said Massingham, as they drove back from the station together. "I'm not going to accept that invitation; I'm not going to call on the De Varsacs, after all. I won't meet that cad—I'd feel like kicking him if I did."

"Mercy, Jack! Why? He's the dearest old man—"

"No doubt of it," cut in Massingham, with a grunt and a lapsing into cheap wit. "I should say he'd be 'dear' at any price. Fancy his having a daughter like that and dressing her as he does."

"Jackey, for shame! He'd dress her better if he could, but he can't afford it."

"He can afford to belong to clubs and to go out nights and play cards—and—all that sort of thing, while she mopes about and sees nothing of life and less of pleasure."

"But she likes it; she's glad to have him go and enjoy himself. Their life is perfectly idyllic, Jackey, they're so entirely wrapped up in each other. Why, it would make her absolutely miserable if she thought her coming back to America had robbed him of even one small pleasure."

"All the same, I don't want to meet the man, and I'm not going to. And that's the end of it."

And so it was—for a time. Miss Gamlingay had an idea hammering at the back of her astute little head; and she was not one to be easily outgeneraled. Consequently, she allowed her cousin to grump and mope about, and make a chimney of himself for the next three or four days, and then came sweetly up to him as he sat under the big catalpa-tree, smoking like a furnace and planning another trip to the West.

"Jackey," she said demurely, "I've prevailed upon mother to give some amateur theatricals, and to let me go to New York for a week to choose the costumes. I said you'd escort me—and you will, won't you?"

"Yes, certainly. But, I say! where can you stop? You can't put up at a hotel, you know, and everybody's out of town."

"Not everybody—there's the De Varsacs. I wrote to Athalie, and she's sent me word to come to her. You can go to the hotel, of course, but you can come round evenings and take us to theaters and things, and keep us from dying of loneliness. Go and pack, Jackey. I want to be off in an hour, and I've oceans of things to do."

And so it fell out that, in spite of his resolutions, Massingham did go to New York, and did visit the humble flat where the De Varsacs had set up their earthly gods, and was then and there made acquainted with Monsieur.

He rose from the corner where the old dresser that did duty for a side-board stood, and came forward to greet his guests—a little, old man, with Athalie's smile and Athalie's eyes; a man whom years of residence in America had not yet taught the trick of perfect English nor robbed of the courtly Old

World air of *le grand seigneur*, and whose gentle dignity of bearing, delicacy of feature, and softness of speech stood sponsor for generations of culture and refinement.

"You shall figure to yourself, Mr. Massingham, what a pleasure it is for me to have the honor of meeting you," he said, as he put forth one slim, perfectly kept hand to meet that of the younger man. "We have talked of you, ah, yes! these many times, my child and I, and of the more than great obligation which you and mademoiselle here have placed us under by your many kindnesses. Sir, it is at once my pleasure and my privilege to greet you."

"Both the pleasure and the privilege are mine, Monsieur," stammered Massingham, wringing the hand outstretched to him, and feeling as helpless and as uncomfortable as a freshly landed fish. "Really, I—Miss de Varsac, how well you are looking. The heat of the city hasn't robbed you of your Newport roses even yet, I see."

"No, not yet," she admitted, with a shy smile, as she dropped her hand in his. "But then they are as much the roses of happiness as of health, Mr. Massingham. I am with father, and it is my birthday. See!"—plucking away her hand and going (as much to give the conversation another turn as to display the gift) to where a pot of mignonnette stood on the window-ledge. "This was here when I woke. Father remembered, although I myself had forgotten. But then father always remembers."

"Chut! chut!" struck in Monsieur, laughing to hide his embarrassment as she called attention to his modest gift and to him. "She is but a child, Mr. Massingham—it takes so little to gratify her. And she repays so amply! Ah, so very amply! It is the joy of heaven to have her near. *Enfant*, you shall no more talk of me and my foolish gifts. You shall get out the refreshment, *chérie*, that monsieur and mademoiselle may not think we are of the heathen born."

"The 'refreshment' took the form of a pint bottle of claret and a few

fancy cakes served on a plate covered with rucked damask and rimmed round with flowers. The glasses, which Monsieur himself brought forth from the lower drawer of the dresser, Massingham noted were as delicate as Venetian bubbles, and not only shone with the radiance of pure crystal, but bore engraved upon them a coronet surrounded by a wreath of minute fleurs-de-lis.

"Sir, I have the honor to drink to your very good health, and to yours, too, Mees Gamlingay," said Monsieur, after he had filled the glasses and passed them around. "This day is to me a great honor which I shall not soon forget."

"Nor I, Monsieur," replied Massingham. "Miss de Varsac, I wish you many happy returns of the day. My very best respects, count."

"Not that, Mr. Massingham; not the title. That is of the past, as"—indicating the glasses—"are these symbols of it, which shall go back to their bed of cotton when we have finish' with them, and shall no more come forth until another honorable occasion. Figure to yourself how inconsistent would be the use of a title in this republican land, and by such as I. All that is of the past, sir; I am no longer what I was. Ah! no—no longer what I was!"

A note of sadness sounded through his voice, a shadow of sadness dimmed his eyes. It was the first, the only, allusion he made to his altered circumstances, for the breeding of the man would not permit him to sink to the petty depths of apologizing for either the poverty of his surroundings or the scantiness of his board.

"So that I have my child and my child's love and respect, I have all that I ask for. All that the once great past could have given, Mr. Massingham," he went on; "and it is without regret that I yield my birthright. I am neither vainglorious enough to wish for my country's restoration to the list of monarchies, nor fool enough to think that it will come. All I ask is that I be allowed to live out my life in the companionship of my daughter, for she is to me title, honors, country, all in one.

Your great republic took from me my fortune, but I regret it not; for it gave to me both wife and child. I can only remember that, and all bitterness dies. It is enough for me to *know* that my Athalie is born of the house of De Varsac without parading it, for the one title I prize is the title of father, the one sovereign I would owe allegiance to is—here!"

He turned and took Athalie in his arms, and Massingham, watching, thought that he had never seen two human faces wear such a look of glory as theirs did then.

"I will respect your wishes, Monsieur, and the title shall never again pass my lips," he said. "But surely you must sometimes regret? Surely you must sometimes wish those who knew Miss de Varsac as a child to meet her and see what time has done for her?"

A look that was strongly suggestive of fear flashed into the old man's eyes, and it seemed to Massingham that his hand shook.

"No, no!" he replied, laughing uneasily. "I have done with the past, sir; quite done with the past. I neither wish for my child to meet those who knew me then, nor to meet them myself. I have buried everything that had to do with those days, and I pray *le bon Dieu* that nothing, and no one connected with them, may ever again cross my way."

A flash of the old suspicion—exorcised in the beginning—came back into Massingham's mind at this; it so ill-accorded with the story of the club and the card-games with his old friends, which were so essential to his nightly rest. He glanced slyly across at Athalie, to see if she, too, might not, by chance, have remarked the discrepancy and found the flaw in the assertion, but the manner in which she blushed on catching his eye and let her own sink before his, told him not what she had found, but what she had lost. Whether the sensation which this discovery awoke in him were more of a shock than a delight he could not, for the moment, determine, for he was conscious of "an inward disturbance" partaking of both, and, while he was hovering on

the border-land of uncertainty, Norma espied a guitar in the corner of the room, and quickly brought it forth.

"Oh! Athalie, you must play my cousin some of those pretty things Mère Alixe taught you at the convent," she said gaily. "It is a dog's age since I have heard them, and I should have forgotten if I had not spied your guitar. She was our prize 'musical pupil,' Jackey, and I promise you a treat indeed. Monsieur, you don't mind if she plays for my cousin, do you?"

"Mind? No, no; Mees Gamlingay, of course not. Why should I? It is to me the greatest of treats to hear her at all times, for I am the foolish one who sits enraptured when she plays and sings. Athalie, *ma fille*, you shall play and give pleasure to us all."

Miss de Varsac did not demur, neither did she attempt any foolish excuses. She merely smiled assent, and, taking up her guitar as her father slipped away into a far corner and established himself in a deep old chair, with his head thrown back, his eyes closed, and the tips of his fingers joined, proceeded to play as she had been asked.

She chose an old French madrigal, with a laughing lilt to its rhythm and an ear-haunting touch to its melody, and she played it with such witching effect that Massingham's nerves began to tingle; for music was one of his greatest weaknesses, and the girl was certainly a finished performer. The first selection concluded, he cried out enthusiastically for another, and then another, and still another after that, and leaned forward in his seat, his hands clasped between his knees, his lips shut, his eyes fixed upon the player as though she were immortal, and so wrapped up in her performance that he did not even notice when Monsieur rose from the chair and slipped softly out of the room.

The afternoon had worn itself away by this time, and the dusk was creeping in and filling all the place with shadows. Still Athalie played on, the wailing notes of the guitar pulsating in

Massingham's ears until his nerves were all a-quiver. The dusk shadows shut in closer and closer, until the room was in a mist of darkness—magical, enchanting darkness that smelt of mignonette and rang with murmuring music—and the spell of these things, winding itself round Massingham's senses, wove that strange, uncertain feeling he had experienced when Miss de Varsac's eyes fell before his, into a thing he now could give a name.

The necromancy of it set his blood tingling, and lifted him up to the very gates of heaven; and his mental intoxication was at its highest pitch when his ear caught a jarring note, and he turned round in time to see a door open and a figure step into the room. It was Monsieur.

Outside, the countless lamps of the city pricked luminous points through the opalescent dusk, and the dim glow of them, streaking in through the window, touched him where he stood—a quiet, listening figure in carefully brushed evening clothes, with a white lawn tie at his throat and a sprig of mignonette in his buttonhole.

In spite of his protestations, in spite of all his breeding, Monsieur was leaving the music, leaving his daughter, leaving his guests, and going, as usual, to his club. Massingham came down to earth again with a rush, and all the tenderness and weakness of a moment before were swallowed up in a reflux of the old, half-exorcised feeling of wrath and dislike.

The man came forward, courtly and gracious as ever, when Athalie finished the number she was playing, and held out his hand to Massingham.

"Sir, I must ask you of your charity to forgive me," he said, "but when one has made an appointment, one has no choice but to keep it or be branded as discourteous. Mees Gamlingay, you will accord me your excuses, will you not, for this seeming breach of courtesy? Athalie, *enfant*, au revoir"—taking her face between his palms and kissing it, after she had helped him on with his outer coat and brought forward his well-brushed hat—"le bon Dieu watch

over you, my beloved, and keep you in His care forever. Mees Gamlingay, Mr. Massingham, adieu."

An almost unconquerable impulse to catch hold of the man and kick him rushed over Massingham, but he held it in check by main force.

"Look here, Monsieur," he sang out suddenly, "I want to ask a favor. You won't be home till late, I suppose, and it's likely to be rather lonesome for the ladies. I'd like to take them to the theater, if you'll give your consent for Miss de Varsac to accompany my cousin and me."

The withered old face lit up as if by magic.

"Sir, if you would, I shall be your debtor for life," he said. "Oh! gladly do I consent, gladly; for the child sees so little that is bright, and I would make her life all sunshine were it mine to ordain." And then, with that wonderful expression still on his face and in his eyes, he shut the door and went his way, humming softly to himself as he passed down the creaking stairs and out under the city's lamps.

"Jackey, you're a love!" exclaimed Miss Gamlingay enthusiastically. "Run and get into your evening clothes, and get back here as quickly as you know how. She's never been to a theater in her life, and it will be the heavenliest of treats. And, Jackey! Get an automobile, if you can—that'll be a second treat—and if you want to take us to supper somewhere afterward, there's no law against it. Only, we'd better go to some quiet, out-of-the-way place for it, where we shan't run the risk of meeting anybody that knows us; for if mother heard, you'd be in her black books forever."

"Right you are," said Massingham, as he escaped from the room. "I'll attend to everything, and be back in less than no time. She shall have *one* glorious good evening if I know anything about it, poor little thing!"

So far as lay in his power he kept that self-given promise, for it was not more than an hour later that he whirled up to the door in a hired automobile with a hired chauffeur, and whirled

away again with the two girls to the theater; and if he needed any reward, the delight of Athalie de Varsac over this new experience was enough to satisfy him. She was enthralled, she was enchanted, she was anything you please that expresses a state of happiness bordering upon the dreams of a hashish-eater; and all through the play Massingham sat and looked at her, and laughed for very joy over her childish excitement.

"Never, never shall I forget it—no, not if I live forever!" she said, as they went down the stairs after it was all over, and climbed back into the puffing auto. "Never was there such a happy, happy night! I can understand what that woman in the play meant when she said she 'felt as though some god had poisoned her with joy.'"

"Can you?" said Massingham, with a laugh. "For myself, I always thought Medea somewhat of a bore, but I'm glad you liked it. Now for the finish. To Frascanti's, chauffeur. Know where it is, don't you? Send her ahead full tilt, then. I'm acting on your suggestion, Num," he added, turning to Miss Gamlingay as they whizzed off; "and taking you where there'll be little chance of meeting anybody who knows us, as it is a place chiefly frequented by foreign political exiles and expatriated conspirators. I sent round from the hotel and engaged a private room and supper for three."

"Jackey, you're a love!"

"I know it, my dear, but you needn't advertise it to the world, and if you don't find a second-rate Italian restaurant come up to your expectations in the way of surprises, blame the circumstance that sends us there, not me."

It was ten minutes later when they whizzed up to it, and the girls found it a vividly illuminated place of flaming lights and Hungarian musicians, and crowded tables, and laughing diners, and it was so pronouncedly Bohemian that Miss Gamlingay was rather shy of it, and was more than grateful for the private room.

"Out and up with you," laughed Massingham, jumping down and pilot-

ing them to a glass door and a flight of red velvet stairs labeled with the sign, *Ladies' Entrance*. "I say! but wouldn't this curl Aunt Fanny's hair. Num?"

"Oh, Jackey! don't mention it. She'd have a conniption. And if she should ever hear——"

"Not a fear of it, so don't begin to cross bridges, you little goose. Hello! here's the ladies' parlor. Run in with you now, and off with your hats and wraps, and come to—— Let me see—where the dickens is the ticket? Oh! here it is—'Room Three.' That's it, just opposite there. I'll run in and order the supper at once, and mind you don't keep me waiting any longer than is necessary, Num."

He turned on his heel as the girls vanished and made his way to room three, pushed open the door and went in. In the center of the room a table was standing, bright with glass and flowers, and over it blazed a cluster of electric lights. Massingham went directly to it, seated himself, took up the bill of fare, and rang for the waiter.

A moment passed, and then a soft step sounded, a hand placed a glass beside his plate, and glasses beside the other plates, and a low voice said softly: "Monsieur has arrive—I am at his pleasure. Shall it be the regular supper or——"

"No, no," cut in Massingham. "I'll give the order, and—hello! what the dickens was that?"

It was a short, sharp, choking cry—a cry of deep shame and humiliation, nothing more—and looking up he saw standing before him, white as a dead man and shaking like a thing all nerves, Monsieur de Varsac, with a towel over one arm and the sprig of mignonette gone from his buttonhole.

For one moment the two men looked at each other—in Massingham's eyes a great horror, and in Monsieur's a shame too deep to put into words; then, of a sudden, the little, old figure, in its shabby dress-suit, broke down utterly and threw out its two hands with a gesture of complete abandonment.

"Ah! *mon Dieu! mon Dieu!* might I not have been spared this?" he wailed,

in a voice whose utter misery bit into Massingham's soul and hurt him as, never in his life, had he been hurt before. "Sir, sir, you see before you a man whose heart is broken, a man whose shame craves of you your pity for the miserable secret he has so long guarded, but who sinks at last under the deep humiliation of it!"

"Good God!" said Massingham, biting his words off short. "This is the 'club,' then? This is the thing that takes you out nights? This?"

"Yes, monsieur, yes. Could I tell my Athalie the truth? Could I let her know that a De Varsac could fall so low? It has been for bread, monsieur, for daily bread; and out of it I have fed, clothed, and educated—— Ah! *mon Dieu! mon Dieu!* It is the heart that breaks, the heart! Monsieur, for the love of that Heaven which has been so kind to you and so bitterly hard with me, I beg, I implore you to keep this from my child."

A sudden rush of memory thrilled Massingham and burned him like fire.

"Keep it from her?" he cried despairingly. "Good heavens, man! she is here—in this place—with Miss Gamlingay—and me."

"Here!" The poor old figure, bent enough as it was with grief and shame, bent lower still, and the two shaking arms, upreaching, wound themselves round and over the bowed head, and Massingham could see the falling of tears that glinted in the piercing light. "Monsieur, of your mercy kill me! monsieur, of your pity for a broken-hearted old man who has lived too long, put me to death before I must look into my child's eyes with the shame of this upon me. Of your mercy, monsieur; of your mercy I implore!"

The sound of laughter and of footsteps coming along the passage to the door struck suddenly in and stung Massingham's ears. For one second he wavered, for one second his wits forsook him; then his foot kicked back the chair beside him, his hands reached up suddenly, and, grasping Monsieur's shaking body, forced it down into the seat.

"Sir! Mr. Massingham!"

"Be still! You are my guest. I'll see the proprietor, and— Ah! here you are at last, girls, eh? I thought it was that fool of a waiter. He's forgotten a chair, you see."

"Forgotten a— Good gracious! Monsieur de Varsac?"

"Father! Dear, dear father, is it really you?"

"Of course it is," said Massingham, with a laugh. "Didn't I say there was likely to be some surprises, Num? Well, I've done the thing after the approved French fashion, you see."

"Done what thing? I don't understand. What does it all mean, Jackey?"

"First and foremost, that I'm going to run down and see the proprietor about that missing chair," said Massingham. "Second, that the banking house of De Varsac is going to open again under the firm name of De Varsac & Massingham; and third, that, if Athalie doesn't mind, it's all coming out like a fairy-tale. Monsieur has done me the honor of accepting me as his son-in-law, and he's going to give up that blessed club for good and all."



THE UNFORGETTING

I SAW the young buds break,
I saw and I knew
That somewhere for old joy's sake
The dead smiled, too.

As sad men smile in their sleep
When their dreams are of joy,
As old men smile lest they weep
At the laugh of a boy;

I heard the dead leaves stir,
I heard and I knew
The men and women that were
Hearing, sighed, too.

Not as they sigh who dread,
Not as the yearning sigh;
But as those who are comforted
Sigh at a grief gone by.

THEODOSIA GARRISON.

ONE DAY TOGETHER



INA rapped timidly on Ford's door, but there was no answer. She paused, undecided.

"I hate to go without telling him good-bye," she said miserably. Then she knocked more loudly, and heard a grunt which she construed as an invitation to enter.

"Brrh, Ford! How can you sleep in such a gale?" she said. "I'm off to the city on the early boat. I came in to tell you good-bye. Don't expect me down before the five."

Ford blinked, yawned, and shook himself into semi-consciousness.

"Good-bye," he mumbled sleepily. "What you off so early for? Won't be a shop in Portland open. Sorry I'm not up to see you off, but that race through the Ribbon yesterday made me dog-tired. 'Care yourself, old lady.'"

He turned his head away from the morning light beginning to shine through his windows, and almost before his wife's light kiss had ceased to flutter on his thick, close-cropped curls, he was asleep again.

"Poor Ford! He's certainly not a person of the most delicate sensibilities," Mrs. Ford Osborne commented to herself, half-relieved, half-piqued, as she tiptoed out of the room. Then the amiability normal to her reasserted itself.

"Dear, old, unsuspecting Ford! Who could hurt him or deceive him—really deceive him?"

She slid the bolt of the door and stepped forth into the color-drenched beauty of the morning. It was not yet six o'clock, and the splendors of dawn

had not vanished from the great bowls of sea and sky. The dark clumps of pointed fir on the scattered islands, the harsh faces of the cliffs, the foam of the eastern waters, were all faintly incarnadined. North and west the world was a marvel of islands with ribbons of shining water between and about them, all half encircled in the crooked elbow of the mainland. South and east stretched the unbroken ocean.

"It's going to be a splendid day," said Nina half wistfully to herself, as she paused on her piazza. She was almost tempted to stay at home. She saw the program before her if she did—breakfast in the sunny dining-room so near the eastern cliffs of the island that one looked through its windows sheer upon the sea, with Ford discoursing of races past and yet to be; cutting flowers for the house—what masses of nasturtiums seemed to have come up overnight! Then a game of tennis with Elsie Hazelton, her championship competitor; a swim, luncheon at the club, an hour's lounging, a sail with Ford if the wind held, tea with half the summer population of Century Island on her piazzas, more lounging—

"I'll be home to dinner, anyway," she said, and firmly turned her back upon the harmless gayeties that had never before seemed to her so harmless or so gay as now, when she was going to Portland to spend the day with Rainesworth.

"One day together," he had said to her, with that appeal in his voice which was not appeal but domination. "One day. What will it mean to you? No more than one flower from your garden. What will it mean to me? Ah, my

dear lady, you know there is always one flower which we cherish, press between the leaves of our most sacred book. You never guessed that I was banal in my sentimental moments, I hope? No matter! Give me my day. You will never miss it. And do you know what it will mean to me through all the rest of the days of all the rest of the years?"

Remembering, Nina's heart beat with the same muffled quickening as when the actual words sounded in her ears, the actual look burned down into her eyes. For she was a young woman, only two years married, and she had missed the enlightenment of pre-matrimonial flirtation. To be a wife of two years' standing generally meant—and Mrs. Osborne's experience was no exception—to have grasped the truth that one's husband did not discard all the other interests of a man when he married, but not quite to have recovered from the resentment of that knowledge. Nina had, furthermore, awakened to the consciousness that Ford was hopelessly matter-of-fact. He called the sunsets to which she tremblingly directed his attention, "very pretty, my dear," he scanned the heavens merely for indications of the wind, and he slept in the back of the box on the great night when his aunt had lent them her opera holdings—slept through *Tristan*. And when Nina had had the Cordons to dinner, the most esthetic, the most *précieuse*, of all her acquaintances, he had demanded: "Who the deuce are the French Primitives?"

Mr. Rainesworth knew who the French Primitives were; as for music, when some one, one April night at the Hazeltons', had played from "Lohengrin," she had known that his heart throbbed with mystery and pain and gladness; and when his long regard had compelled her eyes to answer his, she had felt a blush rise from her throat to her brow. Some wonderful witchery, some compelling sympathy, had enveloped them both, shutting out the room full of polite applauders. That was the night he had won from her the promise of the summer day together—the last night she had seen him in New York.

Since then there had been only his little notes—he was a grand master in the order of the Little Note-Writers; no one could infuse more presumptive tenderness into what read like mere graceful badinage.

Now she was aboard the little steamer threading its way through the tangle of islands to the mainland. And he, coming down from the more elaborate and opulent gayeties of the farther coast—he was a great personage, James Rainesworth, sculptor, and the fashion of him was no small part of his fame—had stopped over to snatch from fate those eight or ten hours whose beauty was to gild his life.

"You are a brave woman," he had said to her with his air of quiet finality, when she had hesitated at his plea. "You have not a little, timorous soul. You dare to be kind. Ah, why do I talk? You understand. You'll come."

"Well," Nina had faltered, ignorant of the great fisherman's rule that even quite wary trout have been known to rise to the glitter of the fly, "bravery."

The boat bumped against the gray piles. There was a bustle of rope throwing, a scraping of gangplanks, all the clamor of disembarkment. At the door of the tiny box which was waiting-room and ticket-office, Nina saw him standing. Near-by, a stout country woman, weighing herself on the automatic scales, protested volubly against their registration; at the book-counter and fruit-stand, small and dingy, another cheapened wares, and a child tugged at her skirts with shrill insistence. The incongruity of the setting struck Nina even before she saw the look on his face. When at last she made that out to be a scowl, she was faintly perturbed. Was it possible that so appreciative a nature as his was so easily moved to vulgar irritation? She scarcely asked herself the question, but across the flattered, expectant, guilty-daring excitement of her mood, the shadow of an undefined criticism passed.

He caught sight of her under the deck awning. The frown was instantly displaced. His hat swept the air. Nina

smiled and nodded. Was it because of a remorseful recollection of Ford's sleepy head upon the pillow that Rainesworth's temples seemed so high and so thinly covered? Of course he was older—that was part of the wonder of it, she told herself, that her friendship could hold inspiration for a man of dignities already assured, of experiences already drained!

"Ah!" he cried, taking her hand in a warm clasp at the gangplank. "Aurora scatters the clouds. I was as nervous as—what is it you women say?—as nervous as a cat with the fear that you might not come. I felt about seventeen years old, and as though I were waiting for my first— Ah, well, I'm over seventeen, Mrs. Osborne."

So the frown was translated into a compliment, the age that thinned his locks was admitted and discounted, her criticisms were dispersed, her fears routed. That "Mrs. Osborne" had been very reassuring, though she was not quite certain why she needed reassurances. Evidently he was going to be merely friendly—beautifully friendly! He would talk as he never had the chance to talk at their interrupted meetings in town; he would tell her his experiences, his dreams; perhaps he would touch upon the subject of that Indian summer ardor that had come to warm his heart too late for fair fruition; but if he did speak of that, she knew— Oh, she was quite convinced—that it would be in such a way as Ford himself could not disapprove. She smiled with sudden confidence into Rainesworth's eyes, and he noticed for the fiftieth time that her own were very lovely.

They walked up the steep, narrow way from the wharf, with its low shops bulging into the sidewalks and its odor of fish and tar and brine. The cloudless August sunshine beat upon them, the air blew briskly, the day was full of promises. The excitement of it all was—in her blood. Of course she loved Ford—dear boy! And of course it was chiefly pity she felt for this world-worn man by her side, who had found so little satisfaction in all his achieved ambi-

tions; pity and admiration, and a little thrill of—she could not quite define the pleasurable glow and palpitation. What would it have meant, she wondered, to go through life hand-in-hand with such a man, an apostle of beauty, learning at his feet, seeing with his eyes; inspiring, sharing?

She turned from the blurred vision of an ideal companionship just in time to see Rainesworth's dark-bearded lips closing over a hearty yawn. He was a man of swift perceptions; he could feel the chill that fell upon her, half of hurt, half of pique, almost before she herself.

"Mrs. Osborne," he said, "do you know what time my train, due at eleven last night, got into this city of junctions? At a quarter of five this morning. There was a small accident—and no sleeper on."

"You poor man! Then you've had—about two hours' sleep at the most. It must have taken you an hour to get to a hotel, and then away from it to the boat. Was any one hurt in your accident?"

"The fireman was killed, I believe." Mr. Rainesworth stifled another yawn. "And I didn't have even two hours' sleep, Mrs. Osborne. I might have had, of course. Sleep! Did you sleep much on Christmas eve when you were six? Well, I am six, and this is the day my kind saint brings me a good gift."

Nina's smiling acceptance of the compliment was a little pale. She thought of the fireman.

"But after a night on a sleepless train, the flesh is weak-until breakfast."

"Breakfast!" Mrs. Osborne shook off the thought of the fireman. "I have a vulgar hunger—my boat left at five-fifty, and there was no one up to give me even a cup of coffee. You'll find me ravenous."

"How I love to hear you say that!" said Rainesworth, with an air of grave admiration. "How I hate the pretense of ethereality! A live, warm, human woman, with a big heart and a big mind, and red blood in her veins—" Then he saw that Nina was looking—embarrassed, was it, or annoyed?—at his poetic physiology. Was it possible that

she was the *rara avis* among women, who was not to be deluded into believing her peptic condition a triumph of personal merit? Or was she merely old-fashioned enough to be a little perturbed by anatomical discourse? At any rate, he forbore to finish his red-corpusele rhapsody.

"Isn't it a lovely, dignified old place?" He changed theme and voice abruptly as they swung into one of the broad, elm-bordered streets of the city. "Opulence without ostentation—the very essence of refinement, is it not? Peace without stagnation—why, I wonder, do we not all live here? Ah, we have the fever in our blood—all of us, even the satisfied and the young. Here's our breakfasting-place, Mrs. Osborne. It's a charming dining-room for a provincial city—on the roof, with a view of the harbor and the hills."

As the elevator whirled them toward the dining-room, the premonition of disillusion laid hold of Nina. In her glamorous vision of the perfect day, vulgar details had been eliminated; of course, she realized now, since they were in the flesh, they must have corporeal ministers to their wants—hotels, elevators, waiters—probably the same waiter that had served her and Ford with luncheon on the day they went down to Century Island! She would try to be reasonable, but it began to seem merely vulgar and silly to have come away from home, without her husband's knowledge, to meet Rainesworth.

The table selected, Rainesworth's discriminating order given, and the waiter departed, Nina brought her troubled gaze back from the view. Rainesworth bent slightly toward her, his hands, long-fingered, nervous, aristocratic, touching each other on the table before him. There was a smile in the depths of his waiting eyes. They were wonderful eyes in their way—keen, tired, brilliant—it was their look of experience that made their attraction for Nina.

"This doesn't mean much to you, child," he said softly, "but you are not

old and gray and battered. If ever you should be—but you'll not, you'll not!—you will know how it feels to have the young Morning herself linger awhile with you—What is it?"

At first Nina had blushed, and her glance had gone down before his look. When she had raised it at the click of the elevator-door, and had half turned toward the sound, her expression had widened into one of dismay. An elderly woman, carrying her excess of adipose tissue with an air of majestic pride, and permitting her purplish complexion to front the morning light with regal challenge, made her voluminous way toward a window table. Behind her toiled a younger woman, whose sleeves of the year-before-last would have proclaimed her secretary and companion even to those who overlooked the testimony of her anxiously deferential manner.

"It's Ford's Aunt Lavinia," announced Nina.

"Has she seen you?" Rainesworth shot a sharp glance at her.

"No, but she will. She's going to sit at a table in the corner. Now she has. She'll see me now." A smile, labored and mechanical, suddenly wreathed Nina's face, and she bowed toward the corner.

"You must go and speak to her," said Rainesworth. "Dear lady, do not look as if you had been caught boiling innocents in oil. Surely Osborne's aunt, though the most censorious of females, cannot count it crime that you should eat your breakfast in the most conspicuous spot in Portland with your husband's friend and your own."

"You don't know Aunt Lavinia," said Nina joylessly. "She's president of the Society for the Suppression of Wayward Girls, and secretary of the Association for Snubbing the Divorced. And she never approved of me."

"To the pure all things are impure," quoted Rainesworth, with a laugh. Then he hesitated, leaned toward her, and said softly: "You didn't tell Ford that you were going to see me to-day?"

Nina shook her head.

"Did you say that you were coming up to shop? Yes? Well, tell your Gorgon—I assure you she has frozen the look of horror on your face—the same thing, and that you met me by accident and are breakfasting with me."

"I hate to lie," objected Nina illogically. "Of course, I have done it already," she added, reddening. "But I—well, I think, maybe, I meant to tell Ford when I got home; he was so sleepy this morning——"

"Confession, Mrs. Osborne, is the contemptible refuge of the weak. It is the shifting of responsibility; it begs some one to restrain the confessor from freedom. It wounds trust wantonly. It is the most egotistic, heartless of virtues. When one has found it necessary to—fib—and regrets it, let him repent and amend, but never let him throw the burden of his peccadillo on another. I advise you—not on my own account, of course, for I am more proud and happy than I can say that you burden your conscience with the tiniest sin for me, but on Ford's and your own—don't fall into the confessing habit. Forgive my lecture. And you really must go and explain to Aunt Lavinia how accidental our meeting was."

"I will," she answered, divided between laughter and misery. "But it will be useless. Aunt Lavinia will know that I am here to elope with you or to rob a bank, or to murder a superannuated clergyman——"

"All equally preposterous suppositions, aren't they? Run, my child. The melons will be here in a minute."

Nina told her story to the unbelieving Mrs. Dexter, who commented meaningly upon the amazingly early hour her nephew's wife had chosen for her trip to town.

"I myself," she said, as though there were some special virtue in the statement, "came down yesterday from Seal Harbor. I shall be glad to accompany you to your hair-dresser when you have finished breakfast with that Mr. Rainesworth. It is the sculptor, isn't it? I suppose you don't know that he has a very unenviable reputation?"

"No, I didn't. But how nice of you

to tell me—it makes him really interesting. About the hair-dresser, I'm not sure, Aunt Lavinia, that I shall really get there, I have so many errands. Didn't you bring Dobson?"

"No, I discharged her. One must sacrifice for any cause. I had to choose between a maid and my annual subscription to the Traveling Woman's Protective Association. Besides, Miss Low is very helpful." Miss Low, secretary and companion, dropped her lids over eyes of humble, conscious, and somewhat weary merit.

"Well, it's been lovely seeing you," declared Nina glibly. "You look splendid, doesn't she, Miss Low? Ford will be so glad when I tell him——"

"You needn't," interrupted Miss Lavinia, after a prolonged, disapproving survey of Rainesworth's back through her lorgnon. "I am coming down myself for a day if I can possibly manage it."

"Lovely! To-day? Then we'll either meet at one of the boats—of course, you have a time-card?—or I'll be on hand to receive you. Ford will be perfectly delighted. He'll give you some exciting sailing. We're in the midst of our little races. Good-by for a little while. Good-by, Miss Low."

As she turned she heard her Aunt Lavinia's shuddering, explosive "Sail!" and she felt slightly soothed.

She tried to be jauntily hungry when she returned to the table, but Mrs. Dexter's lorgnon had an amazing effect upon the viands of Rainesworth's ordering. Sawdust would have been as palatable to Nina as the excellent repast which was spread before her. She ate lightly, her eyes grew feverish, and her cheeks burned under the constant surveillance through the jewel-rimmed glasses in Mrs. Dexter's fat, harsh, ringed hand. Not all the tact and long-exerted skill of her companion could restore her to herself.

"Come," he cried, when she had ceased even to pretend to eat—"come, you are unhappy and excited. Let us go away from here and forget Ford's Aunt Lavinia."

"Where shall we go?" Nina's voice

was divided between relief at the suggestion and the despairing conviction that the earth held no refuge for them.

"We might get an old Maine salt to take us on a cruise to—the Islands of the Blest?"

But that was black disloyalty to Ford. Ford had proposed to her on a sail—they had been becalmed, or he probably would not have had leisure or interest to do it, he was such an enthusiastic skipper! And she was always ballast for the *Nina O.*, when he raced that vessel. He had made her a fair sailor for a woman—she could not go on a mere cruise of coquetry with any other man!

"We'd be sure to be becalmed," was her pretended objection. "And the last steamer to Century Island leaves at five. If I missed that—" Her silence expressed unutterable things.

"Of course one always takes the chances of a calm when one sails," Rainesworth agreed courteously. "And I should also very much regret that. I am due on the *White Heron*—Van Wouter's yacht, you know—to-morrow afternoon; she's off Newport now. And, of course, I must get on to Boston to-night."

The Van Wouters surveyed the pageant of existence from a more conspicuous position than the young Ford Osbornes. The *White Heron* was a yacht of international repute; was a feature at Cowes' races, had entertained a sprig of German royalty aboard. And Mrs. Van Wouter, Nina remembered with just a little throb of vanity and jealousy, was supposed to have Mr. James Rainesworth attached to her chariot-wheels. She would like to make him break that appointment! Then she caught the look in his eyes; it was borne in upon her intuitions that he had meant to boast, had meant to pique her. A little cool disdain crept into her feeling.

"Ah," she said gently. "Then of course you must take no risks, either. Perhaps we'd better stay in town—it's charming, as you said. We can drive about and see the sights."

"The house where Longfellow was

born, and the great grain-elevator, for instance. And there is a list of some twenty-odd churches in the hotel office—all of them would doubtless repay a visit. It will be most romantic and satisfactory. The driver can point out the sights with his whip, and at the close of the excursion he can send Aunt Lavinia an affidavit that I have not sought to corrupt your mind—for he'll hear every word that I utter, of course."

Nina laughed as they left the room. At the door they paused again.

"Seriously," he said, "what are we to do?"

"Seriously, I think you have more experience than I in the disposal of such days."

"You've been lending an ear to my slanderers, I see," he answered, laughing. Then he added, with a sudden fire: "If only you would let my experience, such as it is, plan the day!"

"Let us try my inexperience first," interposed Nina hastily. "Come, let us drive out into the warm, wide, sunny country—drive ourselves, I mean. Aunt Lavinia will have to think the worst—she will, any way, and it's what she enjoys."

"Well," Rainesworth hesitated a little. Then he went off to order the vehicle.

Of course, Nina told herself, she had known that it would happen—it was fated that, as they threaded their way among the tangle of trolley-tracks at the center of the town, Aunt Lavinia should issue magnificently from a shop and put up her glass in her most insolent and condemnatory way. And Rainesworth, who was nothing of a driver, told himself that he might have known, when he was fool enough to consent to drive, that he would have an ugly, unruly brute hired to him. It was a hard-mouthed, Roman-nosed equine, and they had not reached the outskirts of the city before Mr. Rainesworth felt that his arms were parting company from their sockets.

"I had forgotten it was so dusty," coughed Nina, as they left the city well behind them.

"When we get farther out," the gen-

tleman said hopefully, "perhaps it will—whoa, there, you ugly brute!" The big horse had side-stepped, none too gently, at a white paper fluttering on the road.

"He is an ugly beast, isn't he?" said Nina sympathetically.

"Vic—ious!" The word was split by another sudden movement. This time it was an automobile which caused the livery-stable steed such apprehension that he seemed about to climb a telegraph-pole.

Half an hour passed without further trouble. Rainesworth's temper slowly smoothed itself out. Nina's tentative efforts toward conversation—oh, the soulful discourse that was to have been theirs on the day of days!—rew less ejaculatory. The sculptor had leisure to observe, for the first time since they started, the delicate modeling of his companion's cheek, the exquisite veining of her temples. He almost had leisure to ponder how much of the youthful wistfulness of her look was the molding of bone and flesh, and how much the yearning spirit of the woman. He sighed with something like content.

"Do you know," he began gently—"you will forgive me, for I am speaking merely as an artist, not as a man—the contour of your face is more like the Bottic—"

A train roared noisily into a little brown station, standing alone in the fields a hundred rods away; the horse resented the intrusion, reared, pranced, jerked, and began to run. Mr. Rainesworth, the artist, disappeared, and Mr. Rainesworth, the irate man, drew back on the reins with every sign of badly repressed rage. When the beast had been quieted to a somewhat temperate pace, he turned to Nina. She noticed that the glitter in his eyes was an ugly one, and it seemed to her that the look of his lips over his white teeth was snarling.

"Mrs. Osborne," he said, "I'm sorry, but I'm not a good enough driver to manage this hard-mouthed brute."

"Oh, let us go back, by all means," cried Nina. "It is a dreadful creature.

No one could possibly manage him so as to enjoy a quiet drive."

"But you've never seen the horse that Ford couldn't control," whispered a proud little voice within her. Ford! And Aunt Lavinia! A qualm of fear dispelled wifely conceit.

The drive back to town was made in comparative silence, the eminent artist evidently devoting all his energy to the subjugation of the horse and his own temper. The latter, if one could judge by the straight indentation between his dark brows and the straight line of his lips, was about as restive as the former.

While he drove to the stable to return the equipage, Nina waited amid the varnished formalities of the hotel parlor. One day together! It was only twelve o'clock. What was to be done with the rest of the hideous hours?—If only she dared to make her escape—to run away, to catch the one-ten boat for Century Island; to forestall Aunt Lavinia's story. But she didn't dare. She could not act like a spoiled child, after having acted like a foolish woman.

Some of the lines had been erased from Mr. Rainesworth's brow when he reappeared; in passing, it may be remarked that the liveryman's forehead had taken on new corrugations.

"Come," he said, "let us have luncheon and forget that hateful drive."

"Luncheon? Oh, I couldn't."

"But you ate no breakfast," he protested. "And"—he did not wish to give expression to the despairing conviction within him that there was no way of disposing of the remaining hours of the golden day save in eating and drinking—"and you will be faint. After that early start of yours, too."

"Well——" Nina's acquiescence trailed off drearily. After all, if they did not lunch now, what were they to do?

Again the world-wide experience of Mr. Rainesworth was displayed in his ordering. Nina listened uninterestedly.

"And now," he concluded, "bring me the wine-card."

"Beg pardon, sir; no wine-card."

"Why—— No wine-card?" Mr.

Rainesworth's unbelief was almost inarticulate.

"Maine—prohibition," explained the servitor briefly.

"Send me the head-waiter," commanded Rainesworth, thunder in his voice, destructive lightnings in his eyes. Nina felt an inclination toward hysteric laughter. She was young enough not to accord to food and drink places of supreme importance in the scheme of things; she had a wholesome youthful intolerance for those whose happiness could be menaced by such trifles. Contempt ranged itself along with boredom and the fear of Mrs. Dexter's disclosures to complete the dethronement of Rainesworth in her mind. When the conference with the head-waiter resulted in the appearance of two corpulent tea-cups filled with red wine, her lips almost curled.

"To me," she said pleasantly, pushing the cup aside, "almost the whole pleasure of drinking wine comes from the sight of it—the colors are so alive. I don't think I can bring myself to this degradation of it."

Mr. Rainesworth forbore to speak his mind; he generalized neatly, saying that it is youth's privilege to refuse all compromise with the ideal.

"We oldsters, though, know better. We take our Château La Rose in a porcelain bowl instead of a crystal goblet; we accept our day when we may not have—eternity—" his eyes dwelt with a half-tender, half-mocking melancholy upon hers. "We wear our rose of joy hidden beneath our sober coats, and we agree to forgive the thorn that presses when a rose is worn so."

It was all very pretty and pathetic, but it rang false to Nina. It seemed like the repetition of an oft-told tale; she snapped-out "send me the head-waiter" had chimed more sincerely. She could make no answering jest, call up no answering fancy. The enchantment, the excitement, was gone for her, and she was not, like him, skilled by long custom to feign it. She thought of Ford and the sail-whitened Ribbon, the rush of water upon the swift-cutting boat, the breeze, the sun— The di-

ning-room of the Rochambeau, with wine in cups and a jaded man repeating maxims from the "Handy Guide to Flirtation," seemed ugly, tawdry. The piece of artichoke she was eating almost lodged in her throat. She laid down her fork and faced her host with a sudden, desperate resolve.

"Mr. Rainesworth," she said, like a child, "I want to go home."

Mr. Rainesworth exerted great facial control. He repressed all marks of the very real annoyance he felt at his failure to conquer; more difficult still, he kept out of his countenance the relief that filled his heart, that shouted within him: "Thank Heaven! And may I perish miserably if I am ever again misled by a curved cheek and a wistful profile into trying to teach a little *hausfrau* the great game of hearts!"

"You shall go home, dear lady, if that is what you wish," he said gently. "I understand. Aunt Lavinia has spoiled the day for you. We will drive down to the next boat. One-ten, is it? Yes, we can easily make it."

"I know I'm horrid," faltered Nina, weakened by his kindness, apologetic for not having fallen in love with him. "But something—Aunt Lavinia may be—"

"You are not horrid; I shall not let you call yourself names." Oh, the forbearance of him! "You are tired, unstrung by the excitement of your relative's misconstruction of you. Let it give you a little pleasure to think how much joy you gave me."

"Really?" Nina pleaded.

"Really—of course. It hasn't been what we planned and dreamed, but—Mrs. Osborne, you don't know quite what it means to me to be with you on any terms." Voice, eyes, manner, were all perfect. Mr. Rainesworth would scorn to make a graceless exit from any situation.

Then he drove her to the dock, and looked properly dignified and disappointed until the little steamer chugged noisily from its moorings and out into the bay.

Nina almost ran up the ascent of the

island. The midsummer sun* was glaring upon the waters and the almost treeless land. There was a strong breeze, and, from the blue of the sea and its countless inlets, there fluttered a thousand sails. Was Ford out? Oh, she supposed so. What if he should never come in; what if there should be an accident? And she had gone away for a secret day with another man! All the fanciful remorse of an overexcited woman crowded upon her.

As she started up the steps to the piazza, however, she heard, through the open door, his voice at the telephone in the hall. She paused abruptly at his first words—the astonished, "You in Portland, Aunt Lavinia?" Then she stood to the spot listening to the one-part talk.

"Of course I know; she went up this morning. Rainesworth? You mean Jimmy Rainesworth, the sculptor? Why in thunder shouldn't she be? I only hope he gave her a good meal. Driving? I'm glad to hear it; walking's tiresome. My dear Aunt Lavinia, I don't care for that term. Rendezvous is not a permissible expression. I will do nothing of the kind. Excuse me, but that is absolutely none of your business. No!"

He banged the receiver rudely into the hook, and strode off through the hall. She waited until a door at the other end of the house slammed upon his angry retreat. Then she slipped through the entrance and gained her own room unseen.

She could not face him yet. The thing she had done seemed more disgraceful since she had heard his big, angry voice in defense of her. But what did he really think? Would he believe her if she told him that her meeting with Rainesworth was accidental? Would he doubt her always afterward if she told him the truth—the whole truth—about her abortive little flirtation and the disgust it had engendered in her? "The refuge of the weak," Rainesworth had called confession, and "a wanton wounding——"

She went down-stairs. She heard her husband's laugh and Hazelton's on

the piazza. She joined them, looking a little pale, and smiling with something of a weary effort.

"Hello, Nina," cried Ford. "I didn't expect you so early. All tired out, aren't you?"

"A little tired," said Nina.

"Went without your luncheon, I'll wager. Now, didn't you?"

Nina shuddered.

"No, I had plenty to eat," she said; and Hazelton began the familiar masculine disquisition on women's lunches. Ford strode into the dining-room and returned with some sherry.

"Drink that and lie down," he commanded, awkwardly rearranging the pillows in the hammock. Nina obediently swallowed the wine. How big and handsome, how kind and warm-hearted he was, this man of hers!

"What have you been doing?" she asked, when Hazelton had taken himself off and she was stretched in the hammock.

"Nothing much. I played golf this morning, and have loafed all the afternoon."

"I saw your Aunt Lavinia in town. She said she would try to come down for a day."

"Well, she won't be likely to try very hard," said Ford, with heat. "I've been talking to her over the telephone. That woman's mind is a regular Augean stable. What do you think? She saw you breakfasting with Jimmy Rainesworth, and she had the damned impudence to warn me against him. Where did you run across him?"

"Confession," rang the voice in Nina's ears, "is the contemptible refuge of the weak."

"Down near the dock," she said quietly. "He came down from Bar Harbor yesterday. I breakfasted with him, and he drove me about on some of my errands. He's a very poor driver. He doesn't understand horses."

"He's a clever beggar," answered her husband. "He can do better things with his hands than driving."

He lit his pipe and scanned the sky.

"The wind'll die down before eve-

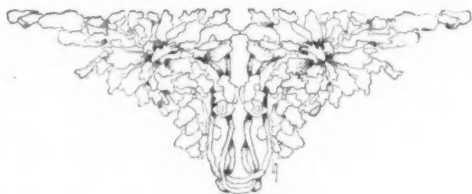
ning," he prophesied. Already he had forgotten Rainesworth and the message of his aunt. Nina looked at him—stallwart, unsuspicious, clean-minded, loving. Tears threatened her eyes.

"Come here and kiss me, Ford," she whispered. "Do you know how I love you? Do you know? Do you know?"

There was the fervor of a speechless repentance in her voice and the touch of her hands. Ford caught them closely to his breast as he leaned over her.

"Really, Nina? I'm such a commonplace duffer."

"I darkly suspect," said Mr. James Rainesworth to himself as the train bore him toward the *White Heron* and its owners, "that I have been the humble instrument of bringing a very devoted young wife to Mr. Ford Osborne to-day. I wonder," he mused smilingly, "whether it will be counted to me for righteousness?"



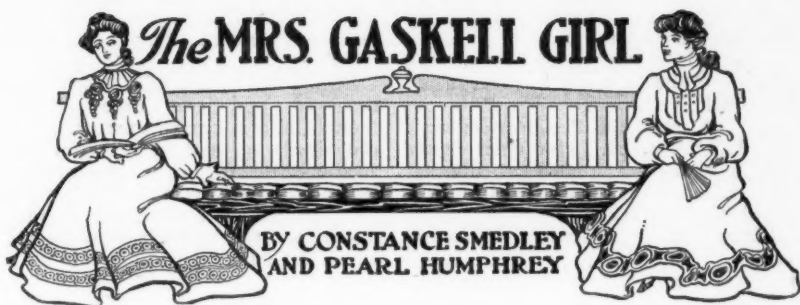
CREDO

LIVE, while the good life's in you;
 Love, while love ye may.
 Measure your joy by your own heart's need;
 Live in the present, and take your meed
 Of the tears that follow after.

Give of your best, unstinting;
 Take, when worth the while.
 Roaming the earth, in a circle wide,
 Heed where ye step, lest a careless stride
 Cause the tears to follow after.

Live, while the red blood's leaping;
 Love, while your heart is young.
 Largely swing, in your chosen way;
 Drink deep of joy, taking now your pay
 For the tears that follow after.

EDWIN WARREN GUYOL.



NELLY came into the drawing-room and found Mrs. Martin leaning back in one of the many comfortable armchairs, and all alone. Nelly had changed her dress

since luncheon, and wore an unusually simple gown, while her coiffure was as pastoral as a two-day's-old Marcel wave would permit.

"What is the matter with your shoulders?" asked Mrs. Martin, of her somewhat early Victorian niece.

"I have taken off the fichu," said Nelly; "it made this dress look so studied. Where is Millie?"

Mrs. Martin allowed the subject to be changed, merely altering the angle of a silver mirror on the table near her so that Nelly could occasionally catch glimpses of her banded hair. Mrs. Martin knew that things seen are mightier than things heard.

"Millie went back to her room after lunch without waiting for coffee. I cannot imagine why she should come to stay with me, and then immure herself in her bedroom for a whole day," volunteered Mrs. Martin placidly.

"She may be making things," rejoined Nelly, a little vaguely. "She is the kind of girl who loves sewing or any useful work. She is just like a Mrs. Gaskell girl, so quiet and dutiful, and full of thought for others. Did you see how she collected the plates for Spratt at luncheon? It brought home to me

how careless we are of servants' trouble."

"Did you happen to glance at Spratt?" asked Mrs. Martin in an expressionless tone.

"Yes," said Nelly, "but I do not think he noticed. He was looking at you in a most perplexed way. Perhaps he had forgotten something."

Mrs. Martin's lips parted in an inscrutable smile, but she made no remark. Nelly kept the silence inviolate for one second. Then she plunged into a burst of irrepressible enthusiasm.

"Oh, I *do* admire Millie so much! If she had been a minister's daughter, or the wife of a poor curate, she would have raised domesticity into a positive heroism. I should like to write a book about her," cried Nelly, warming into further flame. "She would always be quite cheerful darning stockings or making blouses, and would never grumble at having to wear useful, ugly clothes instead of frilly pink things. Talking of pink things, Elise was chattering most excitedly about your pink frock—the one you are going to open the Flower Show in to-morrow. I heard her as I crossed the hall. You never heard such a noise. She was positively shrieking. She really *shouldn't*."

"I tore it yesterday," returned Mrs. Martin. "I am sorry, for I was so fond of that frock, but I caught it in a door, and made such a rent that I have had to give it to Elise. She was so full of joy that I think she must be going to wear it on her day out to-morrow.

Probably she was enlarging on her future grandeur to the others."

"She didn't sound pleased," answered Nelly. "What a pity, a sweet frock like that!"

At that moment the door opened, and Millie entered. Her quiet figure and face were animated by unusual eagerness, and on her arm was carefully folded the frock in question.

"Dear Mrs. Martin," explained Millie, "I saw this pretty frock hanging over a chair just outside your door last night. I had heard you say it could not be mended, but I thought I saw how it could be done, so I took it to my room. I got up early this morning, and I have just finished it. I don't think it shows much."

It was an exquisite piece of sewing, as even Elise would have had to admit had she been asked. Mrs. Martin could not find it in her heart to say she had given the dress away. She thanked Millie very much, and Nelly gazed at her aunt's guest with admiring affection.

"I will put it on this afternoon," said Mrs. Martin.

"No," replied Millie. "I have set my heart on your wearing it at the Flower Show, as you were going to."

Mrs. Martin hesitated. But Nelly's voice rose up.

"Of course she will," she said cordially.

Mrs. Martin took the frock from Millie, and beheld the neat but unmistakable darn across the front width with appreciation, in which she tried hard to infuse a genuine note.

"I must go and find a frock for Elise," she said, with a sigh. "I have promised her one."

Nelly's enthusiasm was slightly dashed by the fresh aspect put upon the affair by this remark; but it soon recovered the little douche, and Mrs. Martin on her return found her niece eagerly imbibing the admirable doctrine that one should try to be a daughter to one's hostess.

"Should not that depend," suggested Mrs. Martin, "to some extent on whether the hostess wishes it? Her domestic

affairs may be so organized as to be quite independent of any quantity of daughters."

"Oh, but," said Nelly, "there are a thousand and one little graceful, thoughtful acts one can perform. One can always try and be a helpful influence everywhere." She beamed affectionately at Millie; and Mrs. Martin, without further speech, sat down to mourn for the sweet silk frock with which it had been necessary to solace Elise.

Several visitors came in later, bringing a cold breath of autumn in with them, for the afternoon had turned chilly. Spratt, the venerable and venerated butler, entering with the teatray, beheld Nelly on her knees, vigorously blowing up a newly lighted fire, while Millie staggered across the room with a heavy table, which she placed ready for the tray by Mrs. Martin's chair, bestowing a bright smile on Spratt, which he did not return. Clouds of acrid smoke filled the room, and one set of callers had already beaten a hasty retreat. The rest sat behind the haze, coughing vigorously and with indignation.

"Oh, Spratt," said Nelly, "I didn't want to bring you up to light the fire, so I've done it. But it doesn't seem to be burning up very well. Can you do anything?"

Spratt met Mrs. Martin's eyes above her handkerchief. After one glance at her trusted retainer, she disappeared entirely behind the fragment of cambric and lace, and her coughs became slightly hysterical. Meanwhile, Spratt performed the operation of raising the register, and retired with dignity through the now clearing atmosphere.

The evening passed on the same plane. Millie's thoughtfulness and Nelly's emulation kept things humming; the atmosphere was stimulating if a trifle strenuous. Millie said that method was a great simplifier of existence, and Nelly promptly began to draw up an elaborate plan for having regular hours for practising, watering the flowers ("to save Spratt," she said), and even dusting her bedroom, with a fur-

ther ambitious plan of reading right through Gibbon's "Fall of Rome."

The rosy atmosphere had clouded a little by breakfast-time. Mrs. Martin and Nelly met each other in the dining-room with unsmiling faces.

"I have a most hateful headache," said Nelly, without perfect good-humor.

Mrs. Martin accorded her somewhat absent-minded sympathy. "Sanders has given notice, after thirty years!" she said. "The best gardener in Suffolk. And all because of Millie. It appears she took a little basket last night and lightly culled *all* the gardenias he was going to show this afternoon."

"Then that accounts for it," said Nelly, somewhat incoherently. "I found a wretched bowl of them in my fender this morning. I couldn't think what the horrid, stuffy, close smell was all night. What awful check!"

"To say nothing of the insult to the way I run my house," added Mrs. Martin. "The thoughtful girl is not invariably a blessing. Where is she?"

"Out in the garden." Nelly indicated the sunny lawn. "She's digging dandelions with a pair of scissors."

"Saunders mustn't meet her!" said Mrs. Martin, rising in some alarm. Nelly went to the window and called out, somewhat brusksly, that breakfast was ready.

"Remember we mustn't say a word about this," cautioned her aunt.

"I suppose not," agreed Nelly, heavily and reluctantly.

To this resolution of courtesy they kept, even when Millie commented on Nelly's headachy appearance, and offered an unfailing panacea in the shape of mental effort. But throughout the morning Nelly made no reference to her planned time-schedule. She nursed her headache till it was time to dress

for the Flower Show, and then kept Mrs. Martin and Millie waiting.

"Come along, Nelly," called her aunt. "We shall miss the train."

An angry kind of gurgle was audible in the distance. Millie ran up to offer her assistance, but was met with a most decided statement that she couldn't do anything, thank you.

A few minutes later Nelly came down flushed, puzzled, and gloveless.

"I can't find a single pair of gloves," she stated. "Elise and I have searched the whole room through. I don't know who's been in my room, but everything's been cleared away. It looks like burglars. Yet I know my gloves were on the bed at nine o'clock this morning!"

Mrs. Martin glanced at the clock hopelessly.

"Oh!" said Millie in an illuminated tone, and ran up-stairs, returning in a minute with a wash-stand drawer full of neatly mended and folded gloves.

Nelly, livid with rage, did not trust herself to speak, but grabbed a pair and walked out to the carriage. Her aunt remarked politely:

"We have missed our train, and every one will be waiting at that Flower Show for me to open it." And she looked down at the darn, conspicuous in the sunlight.

Millie left next morning in a somewhat chastened frame of mind. (Mrs. Martin had a fancy that Nelly's courtesy might have given way to plain-speaking in private.) An hour later, Nelly was found by her aunt lying on a sofa, reading Gyp.

"You might fetch me a handkerchief," was her greeting. Mrs. Martin gave her a firm and explanatory refusal, but when Nelly left the room to run her own errand, she smiled at "Bijou," and murmured devoutly: "Thank Heaven!"



VISIONS OF AN OPTIMIST



BY
MARGARET
SUTTON
BRISCOE



I. BORN-CHAPERONS



HAT is a Subrikinque?

To simplify matters, let me, anticipating the fuller explanation to follow, state at once that *Subrikinque* is a term which, in our intimate circle, has come

to stand definitely for a super-qualified chaperon, warranted by birth and by education to fulfil all the plenipotentiary duties, large and small, that might properly attach to the cult.

Let me note, too, that mere matrimony does not create this office, nor yet choice. Use alone, and, as it appears, unconscious, even unwilling, use seems best calculated to force into being the *Subrikinque*.

It is possible, for instance, that I have been for years, unknowingly, fulfilling a rôle which I am now informed was my fate in life—but, however that may be, it was left to the Optimist to disclose to me my accredited occupation.

Not far away, but a few doors from us, in fact, lives the Optimist.

I cannot now remember how or when he first gained this title with us; but, however accidental the christening, it must have been one peculiarly appropriate, for in years the Optimist has owned no other name with our family, where his pseudonym is a household word, and falls as trippingly from our tongues as if he owned no other cognomen. In turn he has grown to have for the members of our family his own terms of definition—as I, for instance,

am recently dubbed the *Subrikinque*; but in my case the origin of title is a clear record, and came about in this wise.

I was one day, by some chance word, awakened to the fact that the Optimist was no longer so young as he had been. Indeed, he was not young at all, as, the subject once engaging my attention, I began to perceive through the various little hall-marks which time leaves as he passes. Therefore, it seemed to me expedient to hold a little conclave with our neighbor, and, when he next dropped in upon us, to point out to him, delicately, that the years were flying; the home he lived in was, after all, but an old bachelor's hall, where, as the seasons came and went, he would find each year less and less of that home life which, as I viewed it, man needs and should have. In the course of my argument I drew a picture, touching as I could make it, of those lonely, desolate days ahead, when old age would inevitably overtake the Optimist as he sat solitary of an evening by his fireside, where but one armchair now rested.

The tableau, with others of like character, I painted as eloquently as I was able to speak—I was moved myself by the visions conjured up—while the Optimist sat by our warm, blazing hearth listening to me in silence. "In a word," I finally explained, "dear Optimist, I want you to think seriously"—my courage almost failed me here; but I went on—"over the question of—of your marriage.

"I have been thinking of you very

often of late, and I am not quite happy about you. More than that, I am not sure that we—this household, I mean, and some of your other friends—are doing our duty by you. We so delight in your cheering society, we so enjoy what we call 'having you round,' we give you no chance to feel desolate or lonely, as an old bachelor should properly feel.

"There is nothing forlorn about you. How could there be? You have your own particular chair here by our hearth, and half a dozen other hearths. Your place at our tables is always spread, or you know we are but too eager to welcome you. We are merely quarreling as to which of us shall have you—and it's all wrong!

"We are simply encouraging you in your evil courses. Why should you marry while you enjoy this wealth of vicarious domesticity?

"You have all the joys of hearth and home, and most of its dear sorrows, too."

And here I could not fail to speak with feeling:

"You have eaten our bread and salt,

Drunk our water and wine,

The deaths we died you have watched beside . . .

"You give far more to us than we can think of doing for you, and for that very reason we owe it to you to—*cut down your domestic rations*. If you have less domesticity through us, you will feel the need of it in your life; then you'll marry. Which is what you ought to do. I hate to say it, but—vicarious domesticity has not the lasting quality. We shall never mean to shut you out, never; but you know we are set in the world in families, and, no matter how one tries, one's own family comes first. Some day it might happen—— I want you to have a family life of your very own, where you will always be first."

It was at this point that the Optimist interrupted me.

"As a matter of course," he said, "all nice people of our age ought to be married."

"Our age!" I remonstrated. "You

know you are years younger than I am."

In our early playmate days the Optimist and I were of an equal youth.

He is much younger now than I am. Any bachelor is younger than any married woman. A mere question of years does not enter. These facts I set swiftly before the Optimist.

"We are thirty-five," he stated firmly, "and I am your senior by several good months. Every word you have spoken to me is as true as gospel. I will give the matter my serious consideration. I will tie a knot in my watch-chain, see! That will serve to remind me. You have not escaped your fate, have you?" he went on gravely. "A Subrikinque you were born, a Subrikinque you are to be."

"Subrikinque!" I cried. "What does that mean? Where did you get that amazing word? It sounds so strangely familiar, too."

"It isn't possible you have forgotten the sand-dune lovers you used to Subrikinque—at the tender age of eight?" said the Optimist.

And then I remembered. It came back to me as if it were yesterday, the whole occurrence.

The Optimist and I were playmates and companions at the same seashore resort where they carried on their little game—that sand-dune pair. They were not advertised lovers, not formally what is called "engaged" when they arrived at the shore, and as I look back on the episode, I am not sure that they were engaged while there, or when they left. I know they were never married—not to each other. I can perfectly recall the burst of Homeric laughter at our breakfast-table when, in my childish, fluttering treble, I announced to the assembled family that the youthful Optimist had told me a young gentleman was coming to visit them. "The gentleman," I quoted, "who seems to be engaged to the young lady who is coming to visit us."

I could not imagine why my family were so unduly entertained by this information. I had then no idea that any one "played the game" save seriously,

and, as it were, in the sight of Heaven. I have since suffered ruder shocks, but my first disillusion came from that sand-dune pair, as they came to be called, owing to their daily, nightly rambles along the beaches. Rambles to the contrary, they were a conventional couple, with a sophisticated respect for Mrs. Grundy. In the early days of this little episode, my infant vanity was touched and flattered by our young lady guest's apparent devotion to me. Wherever she and her inevitable escort went she seemed to greatly desire my company—especially on those moonlight rambles from which the three of us would return—each night much later than the night previous.

I cannot remember precisely what opened my eyes. I can, however, perfectly recall the scene and the hour of my revolt.

I was sitting in the moonlight on the porch steps, when the sand-dune pair came down the path, and, as of custom, waited for me.

"I believe I want to go to bed to-night," I stated stolidly; and, their surprised reproaches having no effect upon my decision, I let them roam off alone.

"That was not very polite of you, daughter," said my father, from his chair on the porch. "You always have gone with them. Why not to-night?"

My reply was as calm as it was final.

"I'm not going with them any more at all. I've quit being a Subrikinque."

That night and thereafter, with that due regard for the proprieties which seemed a fixed part of their make-up, the sand-dune couple returned to the haunts of men at an hour conventionally, almost needlessly, early.

They were chaperoned no more by the poor little "gooseberry," whom they had mercilessly bored into that open rebellion, somewhat surprising to her family, for the "Subrikinque" was usually accounted a mild and rather polite child.

Subrikinque—where in the world had I unearthed my astonishing word? I have never known where I found it, but what it expressed seemed as plain to my amused family as it was to me,

so I judge the term has merits. The nickname clung to me for a long period; then it was forgotten, until the Optimist thus fished it up from the depths of ancient history and rechristened me, in the moment when I thrust an intrusive, matchmaker's finger into his private affairs.

"No," I stated, after a little thought. "I am not a Subrikinque; not if that implies a chaperon, and, incidentally, a matchmaker. I should be afraid to play the rôle of a kind of marriage-advocate, a propagandist, a sower of sentimental seed; though you can't expect the mother of some half a dozen children, more or less—and such children—and the wife of the husband I have married—and such a husband—not to be biased. Yes, I am prejudiced in favor of matrimony. Why wouldn't I be?"

The Optimist sat and looked into the fire from his side of the hearth, and I looked into the fire from my side.

"I'll tell you what I am thinking, if you will tell me what you are thinking," he said suddenly. "Is it a trade?"

"Yes," I said. "It's a trade."

"Then you play first."

"I was thinking," I said, laughing, "of what you called me just now—a born Subrikinque; and I was wondering if what you have said of me can be true, and, if so, how I might best and soonest escape my fate. I confess that I do have the most astonishing things happen to me, whenever I try to chaperon any one. I get the queerest kind of returns for my efforts. I look forward with dismay to chaperoning my own girls when they grow up, and I shrink from the responsibility of matronizing other mothers' girls; yet I am forever having that duty thrust upon me. I don't like it. I don't feel I do it well. I make the direst mistakes; but as I think of it—yes, you are right, I am almost a professional chaperon engaged in the business so constantly I ought to be an expert. I'd like never to see a young couple again. Sometimes I feel as if I ate and drank lovers—I see so much of them!"

"Dear, dear," said the Optimist.

"This is getting serious! Perhaps the trouble is you've seen too much of me of late. You recall the pleasing aphorism that a pessimist is one who has been intimately acquainted with an optimist?"

I shook my head.

"No," I said. "A pessimistic Subrikinque might be one who has lately been intimately acquainted with—Sweetie Van Rustle."

The Optimist threw back his head and shouted with laughter.

"Now it's coming!" he cried. "You can't deny I haven't waited patiently. I've been dying to hear the story of that Van Rustle house-party since the day you came back from the encounter. I knew something happened there. Your very back hair told the tale; your coiffure was severe for at least a week after, not a puff or a stray curl about it, and as to your gait, your carriage martial! You can't say I have bothered you. I've given you all the time there was. When I heard that Sweetie had asked you to be their house-party Subrikinque—"

"You are entirely mistaken," I interrupted. "You don't understand Sweetie. She is a loving, impulsive girl, with no harm in the world in her heart or her head. She nearly drove me wild before the house-party week was over; but so did all of them—girls and boys. There was no real harm in any one of them, though. I know that. I wouldn't want you to fancy I thought hardly of them."

"Sweetie told me," said the Optimist—he was examining the charm on his watch-guard, and I could not see his eyes; his face was grave enough—"that at her last house-party—the last but one, I mean; not, oh, no! not the one when you were Subrikinque—the chaperon objected to some frivolity, so they swung her up on the high, colonial mantelpiece, and left her there. I asked if the lady wasn't angry, but Sweetie said: 'No, she didn't seem to be, not really.' She added, reflectively, that the Subrikinque in office that week had on a very fetching pair of slippers, with the highest heels she ever beheld."

"Sweetie told me that story when she asked me to act as their chaperon," I said. "She informed me she wanted some one for this party who would—well, who wouldn't—who—"

"Wouldn't be swung to mantels, eh?" said the Optimist. "No, I cannot easily imagine that contingency. But what did happen?"

"Nothing very much," I answered. "I suppose I am merely old-fashioned. Sweetie has no mother. It touched me, somehow, to have her ask me to act as her chaperon. She's not stupid; far from it. She knows exactly what I would stand—and not stand—as a chaperon. Don't you see all it implied, her not choosing again the lady of the high-heeled slippers? But I don't think I shall ever be induced to do it again. I didn't—I didn't exactly like the—the—"

"The job?"

"That about expresses it," I answered. "The first thing that made me uncomfortable—a little—was when I walked into the library one morning and *caught*—I can't use any more delicate term—one of my young couples. It was nothing very much amiss, not if it had been Biddy and the policeman; but I don't expect to find a young lady in our own class of life quite so—quite so—not exactly—you know what I mean!"

"Precisely," said the Optimist. "That was most admirably put, and so lucid."

"But there was nothing," I went on; "nothing to excuse her, not a spark of real affection on either side. In fact, the man is in love with another girl; honestly in love with her, as I happened to know."

"Was that what troubled you?" asked the Optimist.

"No—o," I answered. "I wasn't thinking about the man, particularly—it was the girl I was annoyed with."

"So I supposed," agreed the Optimist. "There is one good thing about a born Subrikinque. She is always a woman, up and down, back and forth, through and through. One can always know just how you will look at a thing,

and where to find you—right in your petticoats. Of *course* the girl was to blame. Did you speak to them? I'm rather thankful you never were a Subrikinque to me, except in an abstract way. I like better belonging to your generation than the generation under you. What did you do?"

"Nothing. I pretended I didn't see, and I slipped out with a book I hadn't come to get. I spoke to Sweetie about it. I didn't give her the names of the actors, of course; merely the incidents. And what do you suppose the child said—her eyes as big and blue as a baby's: '*Maybe she knew him very well.*' Now wasn't that?—oh, of course you can only sit there and laugh. It seemed to me——"

"Seriousness itself," laughed the Optimist. He wiped the tears from his eyes. "You mustn't take me so seriously, either," he urged. "I can't help laughing, because I think it was—as I knew it would be—the most humorous proceeding, your being Subrikinque at one of Sweetie's house-parties. Maybe I understand that little coterie, Subrikinque though you are, as well as you do. I have an exhaustless optimism as to the ultimate good in young people of their variety. I don't discuss their good or bad taste. As to morals—high animal spirits is the worst you can possibly say of them with truth. But they need a cow-puncher as a chap-eron—not you, not you! What next?"

I could not help laughing myself as I recalled the next item of that week's history.

"I was thinking," I said, "of my subtle effort to train Sweetie a little. I didn't like to tell her directly what I wanted her to know, but I did want her to understand how a nice, well-bred girl should view such matters; so I told her a story of my own mother's youth, about a girl who was walking in a garden alone with a young man, and he—he put his arm around her——"

"Oh!" said the Optimist.

"Wait! It's a good story; a splendid moral to it. The girl said: 'Sir, I see we have both been mistaken. I have thought that you were a gentle-

man, and you are not. You have thought that I was not a lady—and I am.' And what do you—you can't imagine what Sweetie said!"

"I don't know about that," said the Optimist. "I am already familiar with the history of the lady who told her children never to thrust beans into their little noses."

I nodded. "You have the idea. Sweetie's reply, in the vernacular, was—hands clasped, eyes shining—'I want to say that! Oh, I *wish* somebody *would* give me the chance. It's the best throw-down I *ever* heard!'"

"You couldn't call her a sentimentalist, anyhow," said the Optimist. "Did she get her chance?"

"She made it, or said she did. She picked out the most respectful and nicest fellow in the party, and while they were walking on the porch in the twilight goaded him into seizing her hand, and then she drew herself up and said—really, you ought to have heard her tell me the story—'Sir, I see we have both been mistaken. I thought you were a gentleman, and you are a lady——' And she said he held on to the porch-rail and roared with laughter. I imagine she roared with him; she did when she told me the story. 'It didn't sound right, at all,' she said. 'I knew I'd get it twisted.' No, I'm not going with them any more, at all." I quoted from past history. "I quit being a Subrikinque."

"Oh, no, you haven't," said the Optimist. "Don't deceive yourself." Something serious in his voice made me look up at him quickly. He was playing with the knot he had tied in his watch-chain, the reminding token.

"You never will 'quit' being one. You may sublimate the office a bit, but a Subrikinque you were born, and one you will die. You could as easily 'quit' breathing. You know too much, that's the trouble. You understand just what your victims need, and for the sympathetic souls of you you can't forbid yourselves trying to help us to our advantage. Take Sweetie, for instance, you know all the best that is in her—and the worst. You can't, you won't

deny yourself to her. I know you will be her Subrikinque whenever she asks you; she knows it; you know it. Take me next—you know precisely what I most need, and—wasn't it a bit cruelly done?—you've showed me in this half-hour, too clearly, my lack. I felt it before; but not so poignantly. I couldn't have put it in words. It's you Subrikinques who make most of the marriages they talk about being made in heaven. You learn—mercy, how fast you learn it!—all that your husbands ever knew, and when you have superimposed that man's knowledge on your own amazing wisdoms—you are invincible. You sensitize and befuddle those of us who have shrewdly escaped the wiles of maidens, until we believe there's nothing in life for the unmarried. We ought to wear camphor-bags when we visit you! Your atmosphere is infection. No, it isn't the unmarried who make the marriages—it's you born-chaperons. I told you I'd trade my thought for yours just now. I was thinking that you had struck in under the fifth rib—deeper than you knew—when you said I ought to have—well, what all of you have that I run with—you married ones. But there's something I most miss, which you haven't yet mentioned. *You none of you care as much for me as you do for each other.* No, you do not. You talk a jargon I can't understand—together. You all belong to a great fraternity; only the initiated can qualify. You talk about 'some day shutting me out.' I have never been in. You don't mean to keep me on the outside—you *can't* take me in, that's the trouble. We haven't the same code of signals. There's but one way to gain membership, to understand what you initiates know, and that way—"again his fingers played with the knot in his chain. "Dear Subrikinque," he cried, as he rose and held out his hand, "be patient with me. There are some things even a born Subrikinque cannot manage or understand or—hurry."

"Oh," I cried, "I am so sorry I spoke! I didn't know—I——"

"Don't worry," he said, smiling. "There you go again! Subrikinque that you are—serious as a church. I'm all right. I'm happy as the day is long—or I shall be."

But I was not happy all the rest of the day; and that knot, which, strangely enough, the Optimist still leaves in his watch-chain, is a source of trouble to me whenever I see him. Who can it be that is refusing our Optimist? Why didn't I let what was well enough alone? The Optimist was right when he called me a Subrikinque. If I am one, knowing my failing, I should be able to correct it. But is it a fault? If experience has taught me that the great fraternity which the Optimist says we married ones belong to is worth while—and more—why pretend that one does not feel—what one feels? Suppose there is a cult of Subrikinques. Pray, why shouldn't there be one? Were it not for us (for a Subrikinque must be, if I understand the organism, a matron who believes in matrimony), where would the world be? Yet no one could wish to be, advertisedly, responsible for the marriages of others. Perhaps it would be wiser, and safer, for me, at least, to decide definitely against being, in any degree, a Subrikinque. One marriage—her own—is enough, in all conscience, for one woman to be answerable for.

Is it possible—he seemed so interested—that the Optimist cares for—No, no, it can't; it *must* not be—Sweetie Van Rustle.

There must be some one who would exactly suit him, who——

There I go again!

I will not be a Subrikinque. This is the way born-chaperons think, plan, act. And yet—how can I help wishing that the Optimist was one of us? He is too right in saying that one who is not initiated may never really be admitted into this greatest fraternity—and it is so pleasant inside.



THE VERY BOTTOM OF HER PURSE

By Anne Warner



Of course Arline's family thought that she knew more than she did, or they never would have trusted her to take Betty and go so far away so all alone. To be sure, there were no

very near or dear ones to have taught her certain elementary facts in life, but there were uncles and aunts who thought some one else must have surely done so, and a guardian who gave no thought to anything, but supposed, as a matter of course, that everybody in the world who had money knew all there was to know about it. Under such circumstances, it was considered quite safe and proper and charming and cheerful that Arline, who was seven-and-twenty, should take Betty, who was seven, and trusting, and go across the water to live indefinitely.

So they went.

It was about eight months later that the trouble came, and it was terrible enough when it did come. For there is no trouble more difficult to deal with than that which befell poor Arline and Betty.

It was a June evening, and the June roses were blooming on the Thousand Year Rose-bush, in the garden below, and even on Betty's cheeks as they nestled in the lace on her mother's gown while the evening prayer was said.

"*Lieber Gott, mach mich fromm dass ich zu dir in Himmel komm.* Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take. *Que le bon Dieu nous bénisse*"

— so it was that the cosmopolitan Betty habitually terminated her day.

"Now, kiss me, my baby," said the mother, when she had done, and the little one turned her sweet lips upward and the kiss was fondly given and received.

"Good night, darling."

"Good night, mama. Are you going to play the piano?"

"Not to-night, dear."

"You won't write and get tired for my picnic to-morrow?"

"No, surely not."

Betty turned her face into her pillow with a sigh of utter content, and Arline went into the next room and sat down by the window.

There were no roses on *her* cheeks; nothing but a sort of pale shadow—the shadow that grows during sleepless nights. She clasped her hands in her lap and gazed out at the boulevard and the wandering crowd of evening promenaders, with unseeing eyes, and then, after awhile, she rose and went to her desk, took out her purse, opened it, and looked thoughtfully at the twenty-mark gold piece within. How little and lonely and helpless and hapless that one small bit of money did appear! And it was all that she had in the world.

For awhile she stared at the coin, and then she laid the purse gently down and went back to the window. It is so curious to be very, very far away from home and to have no money. No money. *No money.* She murmured the two words over and over to herself. And there was Betty in the other room, too. This was Monday. The board was paid until Thursday, and the governess till next Monday, and then what? She sat down and thought.

"It is nine weeks since I wrote. If there was any money there they would surely have sent it before now. The letter couldn't have been lost, for I registered it, and letters of credit cannot be lost, either. They must have failed. If they have failed I haven't a cent in the world. And Betty! And Betty!"

It was the hundredth—the thousandth—yes, the ten thousandth time that she had said those same words to herself during the past three weeks. At first slowly and altogether unbelieving; then with wondering fear; then faster and faster, more fearfully and more fearfully. Until now they had gone through her brain like water over a mill-race and given her no peace by day or night. Poverty had threatened, and now poverty had come. The bottom of her purse had been *there* then; now it was *here*.

The maid came up with the evening's mail, and interrupted her silence with the knock that always made hope flame up so fiercely. But the instant after hope sank down again, for there was no communication from the London bankers.

So she went to bed, and somewhere between then and dawn a few stray dream-fairies closed her tired, frightened eyes for a few stray minutes—a very few, but those few sadly needed.

With the morning Betty woke and, seeing the sunshine, cried out with joy over the splendid promise of her picnic.

"I want two horses to my carriage," she said, throwing her arms around the neck of her white-faced mother. "I don't want to go in a cab."

Arline smiled. She was good at smiling, and the smile was brave and sweet, for she was as good at being brave and sweet as she was at smiling.

"You shall have two horses, pet," she said, and took the purse with its gold piece and went out, accompanied by the gaily hopping Betty, to order the two-horse carriage.

It would cost seven marks.

"Is that much?" Betty asked as they left the stable.

"A good deal," smiled her mother, looking up at the blue sky and wonder-

ing if the dear God was really behind the clouds, and, if so, if He was giving any special thought to Betty just then.

They went next to invite two or three friends to share the splendor of the two horses with them, and also to order the cakes. It is a curious fact that in small German towns, when you drive out to a restaurant for tea, the proprietor is not at all offended at your bringing your own refreshments with you. Indeed, the cakes are so invariably brought that he is surprised if any one expects to buy them of him.

When they returned to the house there was only one letter waiting there, and it was not from the bank. It was from a man whose picture hung in their parlor up-stairs—a man with heavy eyebrows, and a cigarette* in his hand. Betty had seen him twice in her life, but she remembered him mainly through the medium of her doll, which he had given to her in Paris and christened Arlette, in spite of her desire to name it for her mother. I am afraid that there had been other visits when Betty was in bed and asleep; also when Betty was in Germany, and her mother in England; at any rate, there had been something which altered Arline's expression and caused her to suggest the cat and the garden, to the end that she might be alone to read the letter.

Betty accepted the suggestion, and her mother went up-stairs to their bedroom and threw herself upon the couch and read:

It strikes me as such utter rot [thus ran the letter directly it got itself well started]. I get more out of patience whenever I think of it. You don't belong there alone, and you don't know enough to take care of yourself, not to speak of Betty. You know where you do belong—you belong on my knee. I've told you so a dozen times, but you never will allow me to prove it to you. If you'd just let me take hold of you once and set you there, and take all your bothers and troubles and throw them behind you, or behind me, or behind us—I particularly suggest "behind us"—you'd be perfectly reconciled to the situation forever after. You don't know how eminently right it would feel to have my arm around your waist. You think it wouldn't do, but if you'd just try it! It's such a beastly shame that you won't. It makes me mad clear through whenever

I think of it. I try not to think of it, and then I think of it more than ever.

Do you know that you are ruining my disposition? I am becoming morose. Another six months and I shall be out of all running socially. I merely growl when I don't want what they pass me at dinner-parties now. I should think you would feel badly over wrecking such a popular fellow as I used to be. I feel terribly over being wrecked, I assure you. And I was so happy, too, up to that day of the Grand Prix.

Lester wants me to go yachting with him, and I half want to go, because it was he who introduced us, and I half want to plunge overboard when I get there because he did introduce us. If I do plunge overboard and you read about it in the *Paris Herald*, will you feel bad, I wonder? Remburne wants me to go out to India with him, too. Tiger-hunting or some such beastly (pardon me—it wasn't meant) racket. Perhaps I'll go. But I'm so uncertain.

I keep thinking that perhaps you'll break your neck, or that some misfortune will break your spirit, or that some kind fate will bring you to your knees—no, my knees—some way, and, of course, in such a case I want the knees to be nearer than India.

Do you know what I did the other night? The bishop had me down there for Sunday, and after service he took me around to his hospital and showed me all they'd done this year. Of course I gave him a check, because I always pay my board wherever I go, and as it was rather a big one he was much pleased, and confided to me how he was planning to build a new wing for crippled children on the garden side, and how he had money enough to break ground for it this coming autumn. Well, when he was done, and they all had gone up to get ready for the next thing, I went back to the church alone, went to the pew where I sat by you that one service, and took a vow that if misfortune—just a small, agreeable, but especially urgent misfortune—might come upon you and so overwhelm you that you would *have* to turn to me, I would build the whole thing myself and thank God every day of my life into the bargain. And I'll do it, too. If only the Fates will be bad to you and good to me! But you are so frightfully independent, so abominably stiff-necked, so atrociously unreasonable, I do really think you are the most trying woman I ever met—also the sweetest and most lovable. Heavens, if you only guessed how much I want you, or how good I'd be to you! But it's no use telling you anything. You'll keep on living in that hole of a place, doing no good to any one, just as any thin, homely, tame creature might live, and I—oh, I'll go to India and drown myself in tigers! Yes, I will. Good-by.

Arline, finishing, shut her eyes and lay still, thinking.

"I suppose it would be very nice for the poor little crippled children," she said at last slowly, and then she went in and locked up the letter in her tin box, and looked rather shamefacedly at the picture hanging on the wall.

Betty's picnic that afternoon was a great success, and they drove to Hildesia and plunged into such excesses there that Arline brought home one mark and ten pfennigs—almost thirty cents—and she knew that her end was close at hand.

When Betty was in bed she sat down by the window again and thought a long while. One doesn't like to sell oneself to a man whom one has known only eight months, even if he did propose the third day and has kept right on ever since. But when the man has always had a sort of effect that makes one's heart beat even to think of—and when his eyes are different from all the other eyes in the world—and when it will help crippled children—and when there isn't any money unless—and when there is Betty—and when he went into the church and prayed like that—

She took up her pen at last and wrote:

I have your letter, and although I wish you hadn't prayed for me to have misfortune, still it has come, and I guess the poor sick children will get their building.

I wrote for a new letter of credit nine weeks ago, and I registered the letter, so it couldn't have been lost, but they must have failed, for it has never come, and Betty and I have only a mark left to-night. You can see that I have got to marry you. It is awful to have to do it this way, but if you don't mind, and will telegraph me ten pounds right off, I won't mind either. If you don't want to, or if you have gone yachting, I must do something with my diamonds. I don't at all know what to do or how to do it, but it's what people abroad always have to do, and I know I can find out.

I do love you, you know, only you did frighten me so that time you kissed me, and I hope you'll never do it so quick again. I don't like the way you order me about, either, but if you'll only send the ten pounds quick, I'll try not to mind, and it will always be lovely to think of the poor little crippled children.

Yours from now on (if you want me),

ARLINE.

She folded it and sealed it and en-

closed it in one to the bankers, begging them to forward it at once, and if the gentleman had left London, to please let her know at such and such an address by return mail.

And then she went herself and posted it.

The next morning the post brought an American wedding invitation, which was, of course, overweight, and took forty pfennigs out of the pitiful little purse. There was no other mail until noon, when a postal arrived from Scotland, with something written on the face side, where you may write for the same country but not for any foreign country; so Arline paid twenty-five pfennigs for the information that a traveling friend had arrived safely and found rainy weather.

So now she had forty-five pfennigs.

In the afternoon there came a circular in which the wrapper stuck to the enclosure, thus making it a sealed parcel, and she paid forty pfennigs on that.

Leaving five pfennigs in the purse.

"Are you sick, dear mama?" said Betty, coming in from her walk with a big bunch of wild flowers.

"No," said Arline, with her brave smile, "only rather tired."

"Can I have some money for some cakes?"

There was a pause. The dear little face looking earnestly at her mama's saw a strange helplessness there that was unfathomable.

Arline's heart was shutting and opening in a pain that made her speechless. If he was gone to the North Sea! If no one would give her any money for her diamonds!

Betty turned and ran into the other room.

"What are you doing?" Arline cried then, finding speech in her fear that she had frightened the child to tears.

"I'm opening my cat!" Betty cried. She didn't refer to the cat in the garden, but to a tin cat, hitherto held sacred and regarded in the light of a savings-bank. The next moment Betty was back, pouring the contents of the cat into her mother's lap.

"I suppose you've forgotten to go to your bank," she explained, with a little laugh, "so you'll have to take mine."

The great tears welled up in her mother's eyes.

"That I should have brought her to this!" she thought. "Oh, my God in heaven! If he *has* gone to the North Sea, or to India!"

Betty kissed her. "Don't mind taking it, mama," she said tenderly. "I don't cry when you give *me* money. I just say 'Thank you.' And then she kissed her mother again and ran away.

That night Arline did not sleep at all. The letter must have reached London, she knew, but when would the answer reach her? And if he had gone to the North Sea or to India? All the next morning she lay on her bed quite ill with miserable anxiety.

"I don't ever want to be independent again," she thought, with choking sobs. "Oh, dear! If he prayed for misfortune to come to me, he ought to have stayed near to help when it did come."

Betty was out with the governess. Down-stairs Freda was flirting with the butcher's boy so vigorously that you could hear them two flights above.

Then the bell rang. Arline's heart came violently up in her throat. Somehow she knew that it was her doom that had arrived in some shape.

Freda came up presently with the telegram. Her cap was awry and she looked flushed, but Arline had no eyes for anything but that folded bit of paper. At any rate, there was nothing to pay on it.

She broke the seal with trembling fingers. She could hardly see to read at first—the words danced and dazzled so oddly—and then it was all plain.

So glad you have gone sane at last. Am telegraphing fifty pounds. Wish it was myself. Am taking the noon boat. Can't you come to Hanover and be there to eat breakfast with me when I get in? You must.

She sank back on her pillow. Oh, the infinite, blessed relief of it all!

She rang for the lady of the house. "I wish you'd lend me forty marks, *fräulein*," she said, smiling. "I want to go to Hanover this afternoon, and I

don't want to fuss with going to the bank until I come back to-morrow."

Fräulein at once brought her the forty marks, and when Betty came in she was presented with five at once.

"You can get what you like," Arline said, kissing her gaily. "I'm going to go to visit the Tante Majorin to-night, and when I come back you can show me what you've bought with your money."

The money-order came just after lunch. The sun was shining outdoors, and the swallows were whirling in the sky. Oh, but life was a beautiful thing! And there were the little sick children who would owe so much to her. And there was everything! There was even that big man—oh!

Arline slipped into her traveling-suit and pongee coat and departed, and the next morning, when she returned, the man who had given Betty the doll came back with her.

Betty was surprised and delighted to see him again. She remembered him very well indeed, only she had not known that he was anywhere in the neighborhood just then. And he had brought her a ring—almost exactly like her mama's new one.

"Did you give that one to mama, too," she asked, comparing them.

"Yes," said the man, "I did. I'm a very generous fellow."

Arline went up-stairs to lay her hat aside, and when she went into the little parlor she saw a number of letters there, one from the bankers in London.

The man and Betty, coming up to see why she did not return, found her staring at it as if petrified.

"What is the trouble now?" the man asked, with an anxious note in his voice.

Arline gave him the letter, and he read:

DEAR MADAM: We have forwarded the letter as per request, and beg to state that the gentleman is still in London.

We also wish to inform you that a letter of credit for one thousand pounds, made out in your name, was received by us on the sixteenth of last month, but as you told us to hold same until you sent your new address we have adhered to your order. Please notify us when you wish same forwarded.

Very respectfully,
BLANK, BLANK & Co.

The man threw back his head and roared.

Arline was looking so very curiously, oddly pink.

And then, to Betty's great astonishment, the man seized her mother in his arms and kissed her violently, while she cried out about her hair, about her comb, and something vague about Betty herself.

"I only prayed for an agreeable little misfortune," he laughed, "and surely I had my prayer most literally answered. You can't back out now, you know, you can't back out now."

"I don't—want to—back out," panted Arline, trying to get one hand to her head; "but, oh!—oh, please promise me never, never to tell them at home!"

"I shall tell any one I want to," declared the man. "You don't belong to yourself any more—you belong to me. Don't she, Betty?"

"No, she belongs to me," said Betty.

"Not at all," said the man; "she belongs to me, and you do, too—from now on. Don't forget that, puss."

And somehow Betty was pleased, and liked him in spite of his contradicting her. For Betty was feminine, too—like her mother.





PLAYS AND PLAYERS

CHANNING POLLOCK

Midsummer legitimate theatricals have a semiboom. Only a short interval now between seasons. Large floating population one cause for this. "The Gambler of the West" an excellent example of its kind, with one actor above the average. Synopsis of the plot and similarities to more pretentious melodramas. Hattie Williams a pleasant success in her stellar debut in "The Little Cherub." A fair plot, some sparkling songs and an uncommonly pretty chorus. Several interesting revivals



HERE is an old story about a certain manufacturer of palm-leaf fans, who, going to church for the first time in his life, heard preached an eloquent sermon on the punishment hereafter. Far from being terror-struck at this, the breeze-maker, upon leaving the edifice, commented to his wife: "Goodness, dear, but hell would be a great place for my business."

The attitude of the metropolitan theater manager seems to be rather like that. Formerly, playhouses on Broadway were wont to close about the time that people began thinking of ice-cream soda and Decoration Day. They never opened again until light overcoats had come out of the moth-balls and the season had shut down at Coney Island. Of late years, however, the period of inactivity for our places of amusement has been telescoped, as it were—pushed forward at one end by the stream of visitors who come to town during the hot season, and pushed back at the other by the gradually growing realization that the greatest pleasure resort on earth is this little old city by the sea.

The excursions into hot weather made by producers were very timid at first. "Piff, Paff, Pouf" did a land-office business at the Casino through the heated term of 1904, and last summer "Fantana" prevented unavailing payments of rent for the Lyric. About this time, managers began to sit up and take notice. Like the crew in W. W. Jacobs' story of the ship on which two wily able seamen avoided work successfully by playing invalid until there broke out an astonishingly general epidemic of all the maladies known to science, these managers immediately began planning to have musical comedy consumption, legitimate drama spinal meningitis, and vaudeville heart-disease. In the late spring there was scarcely a theater on Broadway for which at least one summer attraction had not been announced, and some of them had two or three. Out of the whole long list so ably exploited by ambitious press-agents, only three actually materialized. Most of the seven or eight productions that were going to run through the hot months and the cold months, and several other kinds of months, stopped running about the last of May. Two of them took breath

and began again later, but the majority will resume operations on that road which is paved with good intentions and so many, many bad plays.

Notwithstanding this collapse of lofty hopes, or perhaps because of it, the period of inertia in theatrical Gotham has been very short. The same material used for boarding up playhouse entrances one day was utilized as a foundation for signs about their opening the next. "New York is hungry for amusement," said the impresarios. "Coney Island has not had a good year, while such of the indoor attractions as stuck out the climbing of the mercury did very well indeed. Let us get into the game." Consequently, the regular season in the first-class theaters began early in August, while those Temples of Thespis devoted to expounding the wrongs of working girls and the secrets of the subway were brought into action a good fortnight earlier. The season of 1905-6 didn't actually stop before we came to the season of 1906-7; it only hesitated.

It seems to me that we are to expect this more and more as New York grows greater and greater. It is absurd to suppose that there can ever be a time when a city of several million inhabitants cannot muster a few thousand salamanders whose ideas of pleasure is a plush seat in a hot auditorium. Certainly, no matter how much torture of a suggested sort is got from watching the activities of slowly melting dancing girls and woefully wilted comedians, one can have a better time in a playhouse than in the average summer resort. At least, there one knows that his seat will not be taken by a family of six the moment he leaves the scene, and he is reasonably sure of getting dinner and supper without having to stand in line before the window through which an arrogant cashier deals out meal-tickets, with advice to "get a move on if you expect anything to eat."

In London and Paris the theaters never seem to shut up. Every time I go to the former city I hear of the "end of the season," but it never ends. I have come to the conclusion that the

closing month of the playhouse in England is rather like the closing hour of the saloon in New York. Summer and winter all the places of amusement in the British metropolis run at full blast, and there never seems to be an appalling dearth of patronage. Of course, London is a bit like Atlantic City in that it has two distinct populations. When the town gets so unbearable that natives begin going elsewhere, Americans commence spending vast sums of hard-earned money for the privilege of taking their places. This obtains more or less nowadays in Gotham, where buyers for big out-of-town shops, brides and grooms, pleasure-seekers, and gentlemen who seek pleasure under the alias of business, gather throughout June, July, and August.

Proprietors of popular-priced theaters in Manhattan are the gainers over their more dignified brethren in that their patrons are not given to hunting up the seashore and the mountains. The lessees of the American Theater, the West End, the Thalia, and the Third Avenue all know that their clientèle may be found in town during August as well as during December. The American threw open its doors late in July this year, and there was so widespread and insistent a demand for admittance that the police were obliged to assist the ticket-seller before the performance could begin.

In my mind, the season is not likely to bring out anything much more interesting than the play which opened the American. "The Gambler of the West" is what this attraction was called by its author, Owen Davis; and one of the critics, writing in a daily newspaper, classified it as "a dramatized fustillade." Notwithstanding the justice of this classification, "The Gambler of the West" proved to be an ingenious and rather exciting "show." It established very clearly the thinness of the line between the sublime and the ridiculous, between one West and another, between David Belasco's *Girl* and Mr. Davis' *Gambler*. I venture this latter comparison for the simple reason that, if Mr. Belasco had never produced

"The Girl of the Golden West," it is a moral certainty that there never would have been any such offering as "The Gambler of" ditto.

Mr. Davis' piece, in point of fact, was as near to being a combination of the play in which Blanche Bates appears at the Belasco, and that in which William Faversham starred at Wallack's, as would have been permitted by the difference in auditors and the stringency of copyright law. The drama produced at the American was not more sensational in its episodes nor more absurd in its premises than either of the other two; it lacked only a sprinkling of the art of Mr. Belasco to make it an entertainment that might have appealed to the two-dollar crowd as readily as it did to that which buys its best seats at a dollar.

Verisimilitude was about the only ingredient really lacking in "The Gambler of the West." Mr. Belasco's story was supposed to take place in the forties, and while, between ourselves, the events it depicted probably could not have taken place then any more than now, we were willing to allow their possibility in the days of the gold-seekers. Mr. Davis, however, tried to make us believe that the tale he told could have transpired at the present time, and that was just a trifle too much for any creature to swallow who had not the throat of the whale that failed to digest Jonah.

Notwithstanding this fault, there was considerable real cleverness in "The Gambler of the West." Several of Mr. Davis' situations were noteworthy strong, and in the hands of an author who could have got the best of them, or felt that it would be advisable to do so, they might have merited enthusiastic praise. *Jack Gordon*, the gambler, about to be knifed by an industrious assistant villain, seized the hands of that gentleman, and then, leaning forward until his cigarette fairly touched the cigar of his would-be murderer, suggested: "Now give me a light." This was truly an example of coolness in danger that might have done credit to *Sherlock Holmes*, and it

seemed to me that, after all, there was little difference between the audience which uproariously applauded the episode and the audiences which I have seen applaud Doctor Doyle's hero, in the person of William Gillette, when he fixed his cigar in a window so that its glow might distract the attention of his captors while he made his escape through a door at the other side of the stage. *Jack Gordon*, indeed, betrayed throughout much of the insouciance of *Sherlock Holmes*, greatly to the delight of the gallery at the American.

"I've only got to say a word to get you shot up," observed the female villain to him in the first act.

"It looks like rain," replied *Gordon*, establishing his indifference to details like approaching death and the laws of courtesy by blowing a whiff of cigarette smoke into the face of the lady.

"There are a dozen men here who would be delighted to kill you for my sake," boasted the damsel.

"We need a little rain to lay the dust," continued *Gordon*. Elementally, you see, the ideal of a hero is about the same on Eighth Avenue that it is on Broadway.

It is as a sort of theatrical shooting-gallery, however, that "The Gambler of the West" made its strongest appeal to the folk who go to the American. Mr. Davis proved that a toy pistol might always be counted upon for a comedy effect, a revolver for a dramatic point, and two revolvers, one held in either hand, for a climax of soul-stirring strength. One couldn't help thinking that Mr. Davis' power as an author was only limited by his inability to get a howitzer or a Gatling gun into action. If it is possible to induce an audience to shout itself hoarse by providing the spectacle of a Hebraic gentleman holding off a horde of cowboys at the end of a couple of Colts, how easy it might be to create an absolute furor by having this same stalwart person scare away an entire Wild West outfit by turning a cannon its way. The question is purely one of mathematics.

Everybody in "The Gambler of the West" had at least two revolvers.

Even the comedy washwoman, who sang and danced innocuously during the course of the third act, sported a modest couple of guns. I should have hated to be Manager A. H. Woods when he got his bill for the production. I will wager that the armament cost more than the scenery. Everybody threatened everybody else with these revolvers, and everybody else held up his or her hands, until the action of the play began to resemble the setting-up exercises of a military company. The characters threatened need not have been much alarmed, because no one ever shot anywhere except in the air. If this had not been true, Mr. Davis must either have concluded his manuscript with the first act, or have brought back his characters as ghosts to carry on the story. There wouldn't have been a man or woman left alive ten minutes after the curtain rose.

The story of "The Gambler of the West" unquestionably was a better story than that of "The Squaw Man" or "The Girl of the Golden West." *Mabel Gray*, a young Eastern girl, had lost her father many years before the beginning of the play. It was her belief that he had been killed by Indians, and that her young brother had been captured at the same time. *Mabel's* half-brother, known as *Denver Dick*, had been taking money from her with the ostensible purpose of locating this child. He had failed to do so, and finally *Mabel* herself had decided to take charge of the search. In her quest she was fortunate enough to find *Jack Gordon*, a gambler for no better reason than the fact that Eighth Avenue audiences insist on their heroes being middlingly dishonest men with noble principles. A clerk, or a floorwalker, or a traveling-salesman, would stand no chance at all on Eighth Avenue in the rôle of a hero. No one would who earned an honest living. The West Side preference is for cracksmen or escaped convicts, and, when the supply of these gives out, gamblers, or even sailor boys, are accepted.

Anyway, not to digress further, *Jack Gordon* fell in love with *Mabel Gray*,

and, assisting her against the machinations of her rascally half-brother, enabled her to discover the stolen relative.

Here an element of really fine dramatic strength entered the play—a dash of the theme which brought success to "Strongheart." The lost brother, had been reared as an Indian. His ambition was the ambition of an Indian. His tastes and sympathies and hopes and fears were those of an Indian. The idea of returning to a pale-face existence could not be made to appeal to him. The fight of the heroine to induce this little deserter of race to return again was really effective and affecting. It was not this, however, that caught Eighth Avenue. What kept the American Theater packed to the doors through that week in July were the hairbreadth escapes of *Mabel Gray* and her regular rescue by her champion, the gambler of the West. The principle of play-making is the same the world over. The *Lady-Who-Goes-to-the-Theater-With-Me* epitomizes it in this synopsis: "My God, she's lost! thank God, she's saved!"

Such a company as the one which presented "The Gambler of the West" at the American, and will present it later at other houses in New York, can deserve but scant attention. A man named David Landau played the gambler with what seemed to me marked ability. He succeeded in realizing a rôle evidently patterned after that of the sheriff in Mr. Belasco's offering without ever unduly suggesting the methods or personality of Frank Keenan. At the same time he invested the part with character and distinction. That seems to me an achievement. Mr. Landau was the only member of the organization worth discussion. The performance, nevertheless, judged from your view-point and mine, was one that prompted thought on human nature and other things. From the view-point of the shop-girl and her "best feller," it was what that "best feller" called it in the lobby—"a damned good show!" And that's a pretty good show on Eighth Avenue.

Between "The Gambler of the West" and "The Little Cherub," which opened the regular season on Broadway, there is no point of likeness except in that both were early productions. Hattie Williams, managed by Charles Frohman, made her debut as a star in this latter piece the first Monday in August at the Criterion Theater. The most prejudiced astronomer would hardly claim that Miss Williams deserves classification as a planet, but she twinkles pleasantly in the capacity of a lesser luminary, and made very pleasant the fifteen or twenty minutes through which she occupied the stage during the performance of "The Little Cherub." Miss Williams has at least one distinct ability of which I did not particularly suspect her before her appearance at the Criterion. She can sing a song of the Yvette Guilbert type quite as well as, and perhaps a bit better than, any one else in America. Her rendering of the ditty called "Experience," at the end of the second act of the new musical comedy, was nothing short of delightful.

"The Little Cherub" is an importation from England, though you wouldn't believe it if you looked at the list of authors on the program. Owen Hall and Ivan Caryll did the piece all by themselves. Usually a London musical comedy is the work of an entire syndicate, and the application for copy-right on it looks like nothing else quite so much as a couple of pages from the city directory. In this case, however, there was not even an extra name to stand for the man who wrote the lyrics. Way back in the bill, mixed in with the information about ladies' cloak-rooms and the method of caring for carriage-checks, we found that "The Doggie in Our Yard" was written by Marie Doro, but this fact didn't add to the roster, and, since few of us survived the heat long enough to hear about doggie, it didn't matter, anyway.

When "The Little Cherub" was produced in London originally it scored rather a distinct failure. Its managers promptly took it off, put it in a new dress, rechristened it "The Girl on the

Stage," substituted Ruth Vincent, whom we know here through her work in "Veronique," for Evie Green, whom we know through her work in "The Duchess of Dantzic," and achieved a quasi success. There isn't any particular reason why "The Little Cherub" should have failed, and there doesn't seem to be any particular reason why it should have succeeded. It is like "The Schoolgirl," or French artichokes—agreeable enough if one is in the right humor, but rather tasteless. English musical pieces—even tasteless English musical pieces—often slip through, however, by reason of their agreeableness, and this is likely to be true of "The Little Cherub." The play is *so* genteel—not shabby genteel, but really and honestly full of the atmosphere of elegance and delicacy. To see it is like knowing well-bred people. You never expect well-bred people to do anything especially surprising or sensational, and you wouldn't expect anything especially surprising or sensational in one of these imported comedies, but there is a charm about cultured men and women, and there is a charm about "The Little Cherub."

It was pleasant on a warm night to sit back in your seat with the moral certainty that nothing was going to be done that would astonish you very much. The Lady-Who-Goes-to-the-Theater-With-Me looked positively grieved when Mabel Hollins kicked a football off the stage into the auditorium. Personally, I felt about this episode rather as I might have done if I had gone to luncheon at the White House and seen Mrs. Roosevelt eat with her knife.

The story of Mr. Hall's work isn't much more original than was the story of "The Catch of the Season," which everybody knows was an adaptation of "Cinderella." The adventures of the prudish old gentleman beguiled into going to supper with an actress have served as dramatic material since the days of the first French farce. I'll bet a hat against a hornet that, if Charlemagne dropped into the Palais Royal any afternoon during the time of his

reign, he saw the literary great-great-grandfather of "The Little Cherub." The *Earl of Sanctobury* is the gentleman of Mr. Hall's acquaintance who objects to frivolity, and Hattie Williams, as *Molly Montrose*, makes a short job of him. Two minutes after they meet, his lordship is pledged to wait for her at the stage door of a theater at Dunbridge Baths, where every other character in the play, including a singing Siamese quartet of daughters, repairs immediately. You don't need much imagination to guess what happens after that. The most desirable thing that happens is that Miss Williams sings "Experience."

The company which presents "The Little Cherub" is entirely adequate, and almost as English as though it had Piccadilly blown in the bottle. Of Miss Williams' work I have already spoken. She did everything that was required of her, and no more, which places her second in order of merit to the comedian of the cast, James Blakeley. Mr. Blakeley only began where the librettist left off. He quite justified himself in the course of the evening for his failure to be entertaining when we saw him with Edna May. Mr. Blakeley is a beaming, British mirth-maker of the sort that old actors call a "mugger," and that has been best exemplified in recent years by Dallas Welford. He is perhaps the only man in the country who could have got laughter out of so time-honored a situation as the appearance of the comedian fresh from an unexpected bath in the briny deep. Tom Wise, as *Sanctobury*, tried hard to be funny, and wasn't. I admit a prejudice against seeing Mr. Wise play foolish old gentlemen in effete musical comedies. Anybody who can contribute to the stage such a portrayal as was Mr. Wise's miner in George Broadhurst's "The Last Chapter," and still continues in farce, ought to be compelled to sit through at least three of the character delineations to be seen in legitimate drama every day on Broadway. There wasn't much for any one else to do in "The Little Cherub," but May Naudain, Mabel

Hollins, Winona Winter, and Grace Field were pleasant as the four daughters, and the chorus looked much prettier than any other chorus ever succeeded in looking on a hot night.

Mr. Caryll's music partook of the character of the rest of the entertainment. No one will remember it long enough to be harmed thereby. The lyrics were bright, even sparkling, in the case of "Dear Little Girls," "My Wife Will Be My Lady," "I Should So Love to be a Boy," "Experience," and "I Was Not Engaged For That." "The Little Cherub" is a nice entertainment, and I am sure you would enjoy it.

Although you will scarcely guess the fact, my sense of duty toward you has just won for me a terrific fight with my conscience. I did so want to write something this month about the "Kreutzer Sonata," which Blanche Walsh presented the second Monday in August at the Manhattan Theater. I know Miss Walsh's acting backward, forward, and sideward. I have heard her play everything from *Romeo* to *Cleopatra*. I witnessed the performance of the "Kreutzer Sonata" in Yiddish, some two years ago, and I have read the manuscript in English, and discussed it in theatrical parlance. Except for one thing, I should be singularly qualified to tell you about this performance at the Manhattan. That one thing is the fact that I have not seen it. I should be delighted to make up the deficiency, but I am writing from Canada, and cannot drop into New York overnight. I promise you in the next number of AINSLEE'S a learned comparison of Miss Walsh with Bertha Kalish, who is to stage the play at the Lyric Theater.

But for this production, and the long list of melodramas before mentioned, there is not much material to fill theatrical columns just now in New York. The four roof gardens, respectively atop the New Amsterdam, the New York, and the Victoria Theaters, and Madison Square Garden, are about to close, and the vaudeville houses have been drooling along without producing

much that is noteworthy. "The Social Whirl," at the Casino, is the only musical comedy in town that has outlived the hot weather, and "The Lion and the Mouse," at the Lyceum, the only dramatic attraction that has not succumbed. August brought a number of revivals, among them McIntyre and Heath in "The Ham Tree," at the New York; Dustin Farnum in "The Virginian," at the Academy, and Blanche Bates in "The Girl of the Golden West," at the Belasco. I dropped in to view this latter attraction again one very hot night, but dropped out soon after, because I am a tender-hearted man, and could not bear to see Frank Keenan sporting a fur overcoat in a paper snow-storm. "His Honor, the Mayor," which was produced in the

middle of the summer at the New York, has moved to Wallack's, where it continues to do a good business. There will be a little shower of new attractions during the latter part of August, and early in September we are to have a regular rain spout of them. There will be plenty to write about then. Just now there isn't, and, besides, from the view-point of an island in the St. Lawrence River, writing about theaters seems an unspeakably unimportant and silly thing to do. With the golden sunset on the swirling waters for real scenery, with the wind in the trees for real music, and the lives of a little colony of busy sparrows for real drama, it is hard to believe that somewhere in the world men build houses in which to pretend things.



TO GOLDENROD

WHY is it that thy golden-freighted plume
 Swings like some saddening censer 'neath my gaze
 As down sun-sprinkled deeps of woodland ways
 I wander in the day's late lustrous gloom?
 Tho' ruddy sumacs glow where Autumn's loom
 Weaves her wide tapestries of reds and grays,
 The bronzing boscage frames a wistful maze
 With haunting sorrow in its rich perfume.

Ah me! the Sun-tide season bides not long
 When once she spreads her cloth of fringed gold;
 With quivering lip she feels the clamorous cold,
 Yet lingers, Siren-wise with broken song:
 Then Goldenrod, heart-sad I hold thee fast,
 Of all the Summer's largess thou art last.

MINNIE FERRIS HAUENSTEIN.

FOR BOOK LOVERS



Archibald Lowery Sessions

How the fashion in fiction changes. The latest type of hero belongs to the class of reformers. "The Awakening of Helena Richie," by Mrs. Deland, a work of more than ordinary merit. Emerson and Walt Whitman in many respects congenial. "The Sphinx's Lawyer," by Frank Danby, a book to revolt all but the morbidly curious. Reviews of "The District Attorney," by William Sage, "The Bottom of the Well," by Frederick Upham Adams, "All for the Love of a Lady," by Eleanor Macartney Lane, "Folly," by Edith Rickert, and others



It requires not a little activity nowadays to keep up with the changes of fashion in fiction. One must be almost constantly on the alert to detect and note these changes as

they appear, or they will have given place to their successors before he is aware of them.

Most of them are of very small importance intrinsically; they are of slight significance, as a rule, as facts which indicate a literary movement in a given direction, and have small influence upon the development of contemporary literature. They are apt to be nothing more than symptoms of the facility with which authors adapt current events and personalities to the demands of publishers or their own notions of originality, and are evidences of the strain put upon the imaginative faculty.

A conspicuous instance of this is to be found in the new type of man which is at present firmly established as the dominant male character in so many new stories. It was only yesterday that the college athlete was the hero. Forgotten as he is now, everybody knew the "six feet of clean young American manhood" who had been captain of the Eleven or had stroked the Eight; whose

training in football or on the crew had him prepared to meet and solve all the possible problems that human experience can encounter. It made little difference where he was found or what he was doing—he was, of course, one of those men who "do things"—he always succeeded in making others look small in comparison.

His successor, who now occupies the center of the stage, belongs to the class of reformers, usually political. He has what he calls ideals, for the sake of which he engages the wicked boss, single-handed and alone, and crushes him in one encounter. His only supporters are to be found in a circle of relatives and friends who know nothing about politics, but whose encouragement is very comforting. They believe in him and in his high purposes as firmly as he himself does, and applaud his sonorous platitudes enthusiastically. He is very much in earnest, very much impressed with the gravity of his mission and the dignity of his position. The keynote to his character is self-consciousness, and in this respect he suffers by comparison with his predecessor.

It is easy enough to see that, in the presentation of these types, there is little creative ability shown. They have both been transferred bodily from real

life to the pages of popular novels; the only difference between fact and fiction being that the exigencies of the stories require that the outcome of their activities shall be triumphant.

For concrete examples of this new brand of hero, we refer our readers to two of the books reviewed this month, namely "Huntington, Jr." and "The District Attorney."



"The Awakening of Helena Richie," published by Harper & Bros., presents Margaret Deland to her readers in a new light; one, however, that was bright enough to cast a pronounced shadow, in a recent prize competition, over some rival short stories that were more highly estimated by the judges.

We all knew, of course, that Mrs. Deland was capable of writing some extremely charming tales, even if they were not very stirring or very profound. She has created some delightful characters, lovable because of their humanness; but she has not hitherto ventured to handle moral problems in which, from one cause or another, so many people sooner or later become entangled, threatening with disaster almost everything that is conventionally regarded as desirable.

Helena Richie's views of life, measured by accepted standards, were perverted. There seems to be no doubt but that Mrs. Deland's purpose was to represent Helena as a woman who regarded the sex relation from the personal rather than from the universal standpoint; the assumption being that such an attitude is essentially immoral; that nothing else could have been expected from her previous experiences of life; and that her awakening to the magnitude of her mistake could be brought about only by an entirely new experience. In developing this phase of the story, Mrs. Deland has shown a genuine artistic perception, for she has very skilfully presented to Mrs. Richie the choice between the man—Lloyd Pryor—and the child, David. The dilemma which thus confronts the woman is the crux of the whole story, and

on this point it is only necessary to say that the decision made by Helena is one which most readers, and practically all women, will approve and sympathize with.

Doctor Lavendar's handling of the situation after he became aware of the condition of affairs is perhaps the best thing in the book. His wisdom is quite unclerical.

Space prevents the detailed discussion which the book deserves, and we must therefore content ourselves with the general observation that the evolution of the story is so natural, the collateral incidents so deftly introduced to relieve and brighten the narrative, and the style so engaging, that we cannot conceive of any reader losing interest at any stage.



Great works of art "teach us to abide by our spontaneous impression with good-humored inflexibility then most when the whole cry of voices is on the other side." Emerson might have said this of his own attitude toward Walt Whitman. His "spontaneous impression" of "Leaves of Grass," was that "it is the most extraordinary piece of wit and wisdom that America has yet contributed"; and, in spite of the inference, that may be drawn from later events, that he objected to Whitman's manner of speech on certain topics, there is no doubt of the tenacity with which he held to his impression in the face of the opposition of his family and friends.

"Days With Walt Whitman," by Edward Carpenter, Macmillan Company, absorbing as it is, contains nothing more interesting than the chapter on "Whitman and Emerson." No one who has read and appreciated the work of these two men can fail to understand the attraction that each had for the other. Their relations, though never very intimate, were of the sort that results from a deep and abiding consciousness of community of thought and feeling.

Mr. Carpenter's book is an unpretentious account of his acquaintance

and association with Walt Whitman, and all the better because it is unpretentious. The visits to Camden, the walks and talks with the poet, the latter's habits of life and thought are described with a simplicity and sympathy that make the little book very delightful reading.



Frank Danby has dedicated her book, "The Sphinx's Lawyer," Frederick A. Stokes Company, to her brother, because he has told her that he hates and loathes it. Her reason has at least the merit of novelty, though its application is not altogether obvious. Dedications have grown to be rather superfluous formalities, but custom and good taste seem to require that at least they should not be forced upon unwilling recipients.

Good taste, however, has had little to do with the writing of this book. Mrs. Frankau evidently is herself conscious of this fact, for her dedication is a defense, another illustration of the French proverb, that "he who excuses himself accuses himself." Pity for the misfortunes of Oscar Wilde is right enough in its place, but its function is best performed by leaving him to oblivion. The apotheosis of Algernon Hesceltine, of whom Wilde is the prototype, is the theme of the book. A novel is not the place for such things; the story, no matter how excellent it may be in other respects, cannot escape the taint of the suggestion. Everybody but the morbidly curious will revolt with the same disgust that is produced by the sight of a loathsome disease.

It is unfortunate that Mrs. Frankau uses her great talent on such work. Considered apart from its subject, the book has many features that are well worth while. The workmanship is beyond criticism, the narrative is well sustained, and moves freely and gracefully; but of course these things will not appeal to those who read stories to be entertained and diverted. Such people, if they force themselves to finish the story, will lay it aside with a sigh of relief and hasten to forget it as soon as possible.

William Sage's book, "The District Attorney," Little, Brown & Co., is one, as may be gathered from its name, in which politics plays an important part. Certain aspects of high finance, which readers of the story will easily recognize, are also involved. It is chiefly the tale of the revolt of a high-minded son against the trust magnate, who has the misfortune to be his father; not altogether original in conception or execution, though it may reasonably be doubted whether many of our money-kings or captains of industry have the sort of sons that Richard Haverland proved himself to be. There may be such young men in real life, but they never get into the newspapers.

To attempt to destroy an alliance between a corrupt money power and a corrupt political boss is a task to be undertaken and successfully accomplished only by the enthusiasm and inexperience of youth, and, when the rivals are in one family, only in a work of fiction.

Young Haverland had no difficulty, after his break with his father, in getting himself elected district attorney on a reform ticket. Once established in the office, he found that events accommodatingly shaped themselves so that he was enabled without much trouble to secure the conviction of the wicked officials who had been the pliant tools of his father.

His success in public office and in his love-affair with Constance Hartley was so complete, that the elder Haverland's admiration outweighed his resentment, and Mr. Sage is enabled to end his tale to the complete satisfaction of all concerned—including the reader.



Any one who is not overfastidious as to such minor matters as literary style, probability of plot and incident, and the logical sequence of events to a reasonable climax, preferring to these things a narrative that concentrates attention, and holds it to the end, will have no fault to find with Frederick Upham Adams' story, "The Bottom of the

Well," published by the G. W. Dillingham Company.

One of the best things about the book is that it makes no pretensions to be anything but a stirring tale of adventure. Its only claim is a claim to the reader's interest, and nothing but extreme captiousness will refuse to make acknowledgment. It is not the ordinary adventure story; most of the action takes place right in New York; nevertheless, the hero's experiences can only be considered as adventures of a very exciting and strenuous kind.

There is no very close coherence between the opening chapters of the book, in which the lad, who afterward appears as Stanley Deane, the adopted son of a British admiral, and as such the heir to an English title, is introduced as the child of a West Indian smuggler, and the balance of the tale, the principal scenes of which are laid in the metropolitan resorts of anarchy, but it makes little difference; causes and effects appear sufficiently related; the motives for the assassination of Amos Buckingham are clear enough; the latter's hostility to Deane is natural under the circumstances; and the means by which Deane seems to be involved in the murder plot are plausible. All these incidents pave the way satisfactorily for the dramatic trial and conviction of the accused man, and the ultimate surprise to the court and jury.

There is the usual love-story, which has an important bearing on the development of the plot.



"All for the Love of a Lady," by Eleanor Macartney Lane, D. Appleton & Co., is a seventeenth-century romance, chiefly concerned with the methods by which "The Two" arranged the affairs of their friends. "The Two" are young Scottish noblemen of eight or nine years rejoicing in the names of Geoffrey Charles Molyneux Aytoun and Angus St. John Frederick Errol. They are wards of the Duke of Carfrae, and believe themselves to be in love with his grace's daughter, the

Lady Iseult of whom Melville the court chronicler wrote: "She was of an ivory fairness, and her hair, the color of a chestnut-bur, fell in two great braids below her knees. Her eyes were a greenish-gray, black-lashed, with a silver sheen over them. She was willow-slender, going always with great grace and no noise."

That this summing up of her charms fails to do the lady justice, one is led to suspect from the fact that she is elsewhere described as very beautiful, and from the further fact that before the story is ended, at least one man loses his life on her account. In spite of this, she had her own peculiar troubles, being married to a man she hated, and having had to stand trial on a charge of witchcraft. She was fortunate in her friends, however, for "The Two" never wavered in their loyalty to her, and were mainly instrumental in rescuing her from her enemies, and restoring her, after the death of her husband, to the arms of the man she loved.

The book is not as ambitious an effort as "Nancy Stair," nor is it, we are constrained to say, in any way equal, as a literary product, to that delightful story.



We had supposed that if there is any literary sin which publishers nowadays consider unpardonable, it is the sin of immaturity. Sophistication in authors is so common that it has come to be looked upon as a matter of course, and its opposite so rare as to be gross. The demand for the former and the rejection of the latter is something more than merely a fashion; it is a symptom of cultivated taste.

It is something of a shock, therefore, that is produced by a perusal of "Huntington, Jr.," by Edward Clary Root, published by the Frederick A. Stokes Company. The book suggests nothing so much as a green apple, and attempts to assimilate it will be followed by distress.

Novel readers have their illusions, no doubt, but hardly the sort of illusions that agitate the typical Yale freshman.

They will therefore in all probability refuse to be much stirred by the inflated heroism of Huntington, Jr., who surrendered the glorious athletic reputation he had built up in the first eight weeks of his freshman year to defend his father from some mysterious trouble that threatened him. Huntington, Sr., is compelled by ill-health to retire from the management of his great shoe-factory, but the ex-freshman bravely takes his place, and in an incredibly short time reduces to order the chaos that is imminent. Having worked this miracle, he turns his attention to the local political boss, and routs him in short order.

The most glaring crudity of the book is the foggy reference to unmerited disgrace hanging over the elder Huntington. The author brings this into his story, but obviously does not know what to do with it. He has not the courage to accuse the old gentleman of actual wrong-doing, and gives no explanation of how or why his reputation happens to be in danger.

The writing of such a book may be valuable practise for one inexperienced in the art, but no reasonable excuse can be offered for its publication.



Miss Edith Rickert is an author who, in our judgment, has never received the recognition to which her work entitled her. It is true, that when her book, "The Reaper," appeared two or three years ago, words of praise were plentiful enough, but it provoked nothing like the interest generally that its merits should have commanded, and that many other books, hopelessly inferior to it, have received, before and since.

It looks as though her new novel,

"Folly," Baker & Taylor Company, was likely to meet a similar fate, in spite of the fact that the critics have indulged in more or less contention over it. It is nothing against either the interest or the literary excellence of the book that the theme is not new; if it were, very few stories could be commended. It deals with the familiar problem of the husband, the wife, and the other—in this case, man. But Miss Rickert makes a new story by her manner of handling the problem and the characters, particularly the character of the woman, Folly Christie.

To formulate a plot is not so difficult; the merest tyro in the art of story-telling can do that, but to create men and women who will consistently act up—or down—to their type, to put into a soul's tragedy the feeling that makes it seem like a real experience in a struggle between principle and circumstance or passion, to use incident as the natural outcome of a collision of human wills and desires, to make it appear that the acts of the people, whether right or wrong, are, under the conditions, necessary; in short, to make the reader hear and feel and see as well as read—all this requires a high order of talent.

Miss Rickert does this with Andrew and Folly Christie and Haldane Gore, and even with Mabel Patrick, the wife's loyal friend. The portrayal of Mrs. Christie's agonies of mind, torn as she is between her duty to her husband and baby and her passion for Gore, is harrowing to be sure, but the unusual skill with which it is done cannot be denied.

Altogether, it is the most notable book of its kind that has recently appeared, and adds much to its author's reputation for literary taste and craftsmanship.

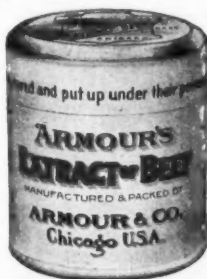


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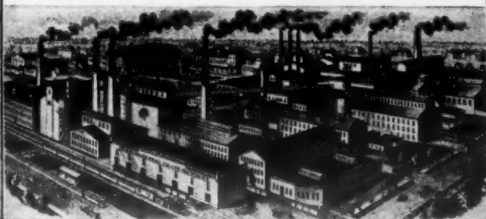
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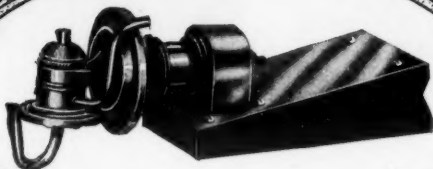
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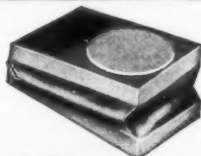
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offers instant relief from chaps and skin roughness which keen fall winds bring about of folk.

MENNEN'S BORATED TALCUM POWDER
soothes and heals all chafing and chapping, and is put up in non-refillable box—Mennen's face on the cover guarantees it's genuine.

For sale everywhere, or by mail for 25 cts.

GERHARD MENNEN CO.
Newark, N.J.
"Try Mennen's Violet Talcum Powder."

Delicate Skins and Dainty Fabrics



are most easily—most safely washed with

Pearline

The more DAINTY—the more DELICATE—the greater the need of PEARLINE'S help. SAVES your labor—SAVES your fabrics—ELSE millions would not have been convinced simply by the use of a trial package.

Pearline gives 100%

SERVICE
QUALITY
EFFICIENCY



Pabst Extract

The "Best" Tonic

When you are nervous, sleepless or fagged out, try a small glass of Pabst Extract, morning, noon and night. It will aid your digestion, steady your nerves, bring you refreshing sleep and build you up physically.

25 Cents at all druggists.
Insist upon the original.

Pabst Extract Department, Milwaukee, Wis.

THE INTERNATIONAL DENTIFRICE



**ARNICA
JELLY**

keeps the skin soft and smooth; nothing better for chaps, pimples, burns, bruises and all eruptions. The collapsible metal tube is convenient and unbreakable. If your dealer hasn't it, send to us.

Postpaid, 25c.



**ARNICA
TOOTH SOAP**

ARNICA TOOTH SOAP antiseptic, preserves, beautifies, hardens the gums—whitens the teeth. A leading dentifrice for a third of a century. The metal package is most convenient for travel or the home. No liquid or powder to spill or waste. See at all Druggists. (Sent postpaid if yours hasn't it.)

C. H. STRONG & CO., CHICAGO, U. S. A.

Office of The Smart Set

(ESS ESS PUBLISHING CO.)

452 FIFTH AVENUE

NEW YORK

To Advertisers:

I beg to announce that the ESS ESS PUBLISHING COMPANY, the publishers of "THE SMART SET," has purchased "TRANSATLANTIC TALES."

This magazine met with success from the beginning, and was received with much favor. The growth has been rapid, and we can now guarantee a circulation of more than 32,000 copies each month.

I take pleasure also in informing you that, commencing with the issue of October, the rate for advertising space in "TRANSATLANTIC TALES" will be reduced from the present rate of \$100 per page to \$50 per page.

This rate will be pro rata down to $\frac{1}{4}$ page.

The rate for space of less than $\frac{1}{4}$ page will be 30c. per agate line.

This rate will be FLAT. No discount for time or space.

The advertising rate in "THE SMART SET" (more than 140,000 guaranteed circulation) is \$150 per page.

I beg also to announce a combination rate on "THE SMART SET" and "TRANSATLANTIC TALES" of \$175 per page, less 5% for cash. To obtain this combination rate, uniform space in both "THE SMART SET" and "TRANSATLANTIC TALES" must be used in issues of like date. If only one magazine is used, full separate card rate will be charged.

No magazine publisher has ever offered the advertiser such QUALITY and QUANTITY of circulation as that of "THE SMART SET" and "TRANSATLANTIC TALES" at so low a rate, whether used singly or in combination.

Respectfully yours,

ESS ESS PUBLISHING COMPANY

Kurt Wilson
ADV. MANAGER.



May we send you free, **SAMPLES** of our Novel and Exclusive Line of Ticking and our 144-page illustrated book?

The samples include the good old-fashioned A.C.A. Ticking in wide and narrow stripe; dust-proof Satin Finish Ticking in linen effects; and our exclusive Mercerized Art Twills in fancy stripe with floral effects, in blue, pink, yellow, green or lavender. See the coupon below.

OSTERMOOR

MATTRESS

15.

THE PERFECT MATTRESS

is the one you never feel, the one that never forces itself upon your mind, the one that *lets* you sleep if sleepy, and *lulls* you to dreamland when restless.

With a hair mattress beneath you, you are constantly squirming around to avoid lumps and hollows. Hair mattresses are bound to be lumpy and uneven because the hair is stuffed into the tick in handfuls.

The Ostermoor is made of Ostermoor sheets of uniform thickness, *laid* in the tick by hand—*built*, not stuffed. Dust and vermin-proof.

The Ostermoor is aseptically clean, non-absorbent, does not mat, pack or lump, keeps its original resiliency, and never needs remaking. Better than hair—much cheaper.



FROM THE EXPRESS PREPAID of an **OSTERMOOR Dealer**

Send at Once for Samples of Ticking and the Book

With the samples that we will send you, you can select a ticking to harmonize with the furnishings of your bedroom, and please your individual taste. The full line of samples we send you free, together with our 144-page book, "The Test of Time." This is not an ordinary advertising booklet, but a complete work upon sleep and beds, and contains over 200 illustrations. To get ticking samples, book and name of your local Ostermoor dealer, all you need to do is to fill out and mail us the coupon, or send request on a postal if you prefer. But do it now.

We Sell by Mail or Through 2,500 Ostermoor Dealers

Regular Sizes and Prices	
3 feet 6 inches wide, 25 lbs.	\$8.35
3 feet wide, 30 lbs.	10.00
3 feet 6 inches wide, 30 lbs.	11.70
4 feet wide, 40 lbs.	13.35
4 feet 6 inches wide, 40 lbs.	15.00
All 6 feet 3 inches long.	
Express Charges Prepaid.	
In two parts, 50 cents extra.	

Exclusive Ostermoor agencies everywhere—that is our aim. We were compelled to this move to protect the public against worthless imitations. The Ostermoor dealer in your vicinity—we tell you who he is if you mail the coupon—will show you a mattress with the Ostermoor name and label; that alone stands for mattress excellence. Be sure to look for our name and trade mark sewn on the end. If you order of us by mail, we ship mattress, express paid, same day check is received, and allow you 30 Nights' Free Trial. If not satisfied you may return mattress and we will refund price without question.

OSTERMOOR & COMPANY
174 Elizabeth Street, New York

Canadian Agency: Ideal Bedding Co., Ltd., Montreal



Ostermoor & Company,
174 Elizabeth St., New York

Without obligation on my part, please send **Samples of Ticking** and your 144-page book, so that I may learn about the Ostermoor, and the name of my Ostermoor dealer.

Name.....

Address.....

AUTOCRAT

THE STATIONERY OF QUALITY



Our Special Offer—That you may know **AUTOCRAT** Stationery quickly and thoroughly we will send for ten cents, in stamps or silver, a liberal assortment of these papers in their varying sizes and tints—including our newest Linen Velour—with envelopes to match. Also our interesting booklet "Polite Correspondence," giving the approved forms of extending and accepting social invitations.

The best dealers sell AUTOCRAT Stationery

If you have any difficulty in obtaining it, send us your dealer's name, and we will see that you are supplied.

WHITE & WYCKOFF MFG. CO.
76 Water Street, Holyoke, Mass.

**Does YOUR line
begin with**

C

	PAGE
Car Inspectors	11
Carpenters	18
Checking Clerks	9-12-26
Claim Agents	12-26
Clergymen	15
Clerks	6-12-26
Cloth Merchants	18
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This is simply part of the index from **Dixon's Pencil Guide**—a book of 32 pages alphabetically divided by vocations—which selects and describes the right Lead Pencil for every line of work. It prevents haphazard pencil buying and ends all pencil troubles. The Guide is sent free on request.

If your dealer doesn't keep Dixon's Pencils, send 16 cents for samples, worth double the money.

Dept. A.Z., Joseph Dixon Crucible Co., Jersey City, N. J.



FREE

For examination. Sent at our expense if you mention this advertisement.

Cyclopedia of Modern Shop Practice

Four massive volumes. Over 3,000 pages—size of page, 7 x 10 inches. Bound in ¾ red morocco leather. 2,000 engravings. This work is especially designed for the machinist, tool maker, blacksmith, foundryman, pattern-maker, sheet metal worker, draftsman, steam and gas engine engineer, electrician, etc., who has not the time to take a regular course of instruction or who cannot afford it.

REGULAR PRICE \$24.00

SPECIAL 30 DAY OFFER \$12.00

Let us send you the entire set, express prepaid, for five days free examination. Pay us \$3 down and \$2 a month for five months if you keep the books. Cash price, \$10.00. We send for them at our expense if not satisfactory.

The only reason we make such a liberal offer is to interest the public in the extraordinary advantages offered by the regular courses of the American School. A 200-page handbook, sent free on request.

BRIEF TABLE OF CONTENTS

Machine Shop Work, Tool Making; Pattern Making, Machine Design, Metallurgy; Gas and Oil Engines, Producer Plants, Automobiles, Elevators, Steam Engine, Steam Turbine, Management of Dynamics and Motors; Forging, Sheet Metal Work, Tinsmithing, Mechanical Drawing, Mechanism.

AMERICAN SCHOOL of CORRESPONDENCE

3102 Armour Ave., Chicago, Ill.

Mention Ainslee's Oct. 1

When writing to advertisers please mention Ainslee's

Get All the Dirt Out of Your Skin

There's a great deal of difference between *getting some of the dirt off* and *getting all of the dirt out*. Washing will take off surface dirt. Only massage with

Pompeian Massage Cream

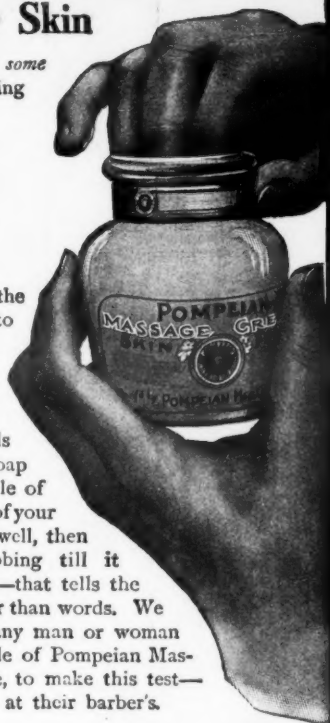
will take out the dirt that is in the pores—below the surface. It's this pore-dirt that it is most necessary to remove, because that is the cause of blackheads, bad complexions and unhealthy skins.

To prove how washing leaves the pore-dirt in, and just how Pompeian Massage

Cream gets it out, wash your hands as thoroughly as you can with soap and water, then rub a little of the cream on the back of your hand. Rub it in well, then

keep on rubbing till it comes out—that tells the story better than words. We

will send any man or woman a liberal sample of Pompeian Massage Cream, free, to make this test—our men can try it at their barber's.



Only a Postal is Necessary to Send for Generous Sample—Free

- and our illustrated book on Facial Massage, showing how to keep
- the skin in a natural, healthy condition, free from black-heads and other imperfections.

Ladies appreciate Pompeian Massage Cream because it gives a brighter complexion, by stimulating the circulation, and keeping the pores free from dust and dirt, which mere soap and water can only partially remove.

Gentlemen find Pompeian Massage Cream is a great relief after shaving; it takes away the after-shaving discomfort, and tends to make the skin stronger and less sensitive. Your barber has Pompeian Massage Cream—insist on a *hand* massage and don't let him use a substitute.



This is the jar the druggist sells for home use.

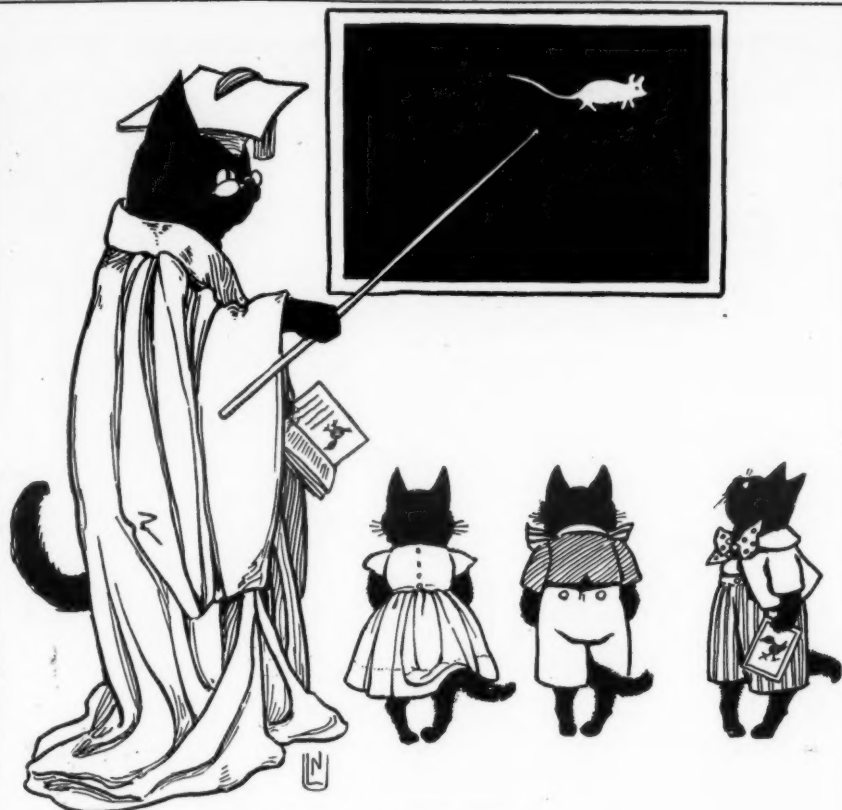
We prefer you to buy of your dealer whenever possible. Do not accept a substitute for Pompeian under any circumstances. If your dealer does not keep it, send us his name, and we will send a 50-cent or \$1.00 jar of the Cream, postpaid on receipt of price.



This is the jar the barber buys.

Pompeian Mfg. Co., 34 Main Street, Cleveland, O.

Pompeian Massage Soap is a delight to any one who appreciates a soap of the very highest quality



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KINDERGARTEN

Both press and public declare that nothing more clever than "*The Kindergarten*" was ever seen in cat pictures.

Here is a final chance to get a copy suitable for framing 8 x 10 1-2 inches. There isn't a home in which this artistic bit of cat cleverness doesn't fit in somewhere—whether it be the Den, the Nursery, the Cosey Corner, the Library, or the Summer Cottage. It is by Nellie Littlehale Umbstaetter, the artist of *The Black Cat* magazine, and forms one of 150 original designs which picturesquely present this famous feline in the role of the Minstrel, the Butterfly, the Football Hero, the Chef, etc., as also in connection with various sets of alphabets and tail pieces. The set cannot be broken and is only sold with a year's subscription to *The Black Cat* under the following special combination offer.

The Black Cat, one year, post paid	\$0.50
The set of 150 drawings, in specially designed covering, post paid	1.00
	\$1.50

Special Price for Both, 75 cents

The Shortstory Publishing Co.,

142 High Street, Boston, Mass.

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THIS IS THE STYLE



of suits now worn by correct dressers everywhere. It is many years since fashion has produced such handsome and nobby garments for men's wear. LOOK at the long straight front effect of coat, the shaped back, with long vent. "They are beauties," will look well on old and young.

TO BE UP-TO-DATE order from us a full suit, coat, pants and vest made from the new dove Brown Worsted or

a Black and White mixed cloth.

We will make it exactly like the above illustration, with an extra pair of striped worsted Trousers, and an extra fancy vest, to wear on occasion; practically two full suits for the price of one suit.....

Besides, we send them to you in a neat, patent suit-case, without extra charge.

Let us send you a large illustration of the new suit, showing every detail in back and front. With it will send free newest samples for Suits, Trousers, Fancy Vests, etc. A postal card will bring them to your door. Address

THE FIFTH AVENUE TAILORS,
1051 Kesner Bldg., Fifth Ave. & Congress, CHICAGO
Reference: Royal Trust Company Bank, Cap. \$1,000,000.00.

ALL ONLY \$10

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A GOOD POSITION and a large salary always await an expert Book-keeper. We teach you Bookkeeping thoroughly by mail and make absolutely no charge for tuition until we place you in a paying position. If you wish to better yourself, write for our guarantee offer and our FREE book "How to Become an Expert Bookkeeper."

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Goisha Diamonds

THE LATEST SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY

Bright, sparkling, beautiful. For brilliancy they equal the genuine, standing all test and puzzle experts. One twentieth the expense. Sent free with privilege of examination. For particulars, prices, etc., address

THE R. GREGG MFG. & IMPT. CO.

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Mr.

Parker

CERTAINLY MAKES
A GOOD

FOUNTAIN PEN

Standard or Self Filling



Because

He makes an honest Pen and makes it the best he knows how.

Sells Because It Excels

20

page art catalog, and also the name of the nearest PARKER PEN dealer, mailed upon request.

The Parker Pen Company

62 Mill St., Janesville, Wis.

P. S.—By the way, if you are thinking of purchasing a fountain pen and will mention it when sending for catalog, we will send you, complimentary, a very nice and useful little present.

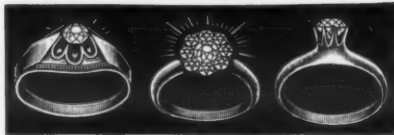




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Order your choice of a diamond on approval prepaid. Do not pay a cent until you have examined the gem and found it absolutely satisfactory. We want to prove to you—solely at our risk—the great superiority of Marshall "F" grade diamonds. You risk nothing. Why should anybody refuse to take advantage of this offer?

LOOK at these



Special Offers on Diamonds

\$3.30 a Month

buys this beautiful diamond ring in Belcher setting—a fine Marshall "F" grade diamond, far better than the so-called "highest grade" diamonds carried by most jewelers. Total price only: \$33.00.

The all-diamond cluster at \$8.50 a month, the beautiful Tiffany ring and other special offers are described in our circulars.

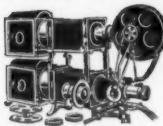
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NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY as our instruction book and "Business Guide" tell all. We furnish Complete Outfits with Big Advertising Posters, etc. Humorous dramas brimful of fun, travel, history, religion, temperance work and songs illustrated. One man can do it. Astonishing Opportunity in any locality for a man with a little money to show in churches, school houses, lodge halls, theatres, etc. Frosts \$10 to over \$100 per night. Others do it, why not you? It's easy! Write to us and we'll tell you how. Catalogue free.

AMUSEMENT SUPPLY CO., 463 Chemical Bank Bldg., CHICAGO.



MAKE \$10.00 A DAY

One man and one machine can do this with a

PETTYJOHN

Concrete Block Machine

An opportunity TO THE FIRST TO WRITE US from each locality to start a BIG PAYING BUSINESS with small capital. If you are going to build a home you should have it. Whole outfit costs only \$125.00. Sand, Water and Cement only materials required. One man can make 200 blocks daily. Machine sent on trial.

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THE PETTYJOHN CO., 609 N. 4th St., Terre Haute, Ind.

Buy Hopkins Book No. 7

FOR 25c. AND BUILD CHEAPLY.
THIS COTTAGE FOR \$800



FULL BLUE-PRINT PLANS, \$6.00

This is only one of the many low cost dwellings shown in our new book. Size of this house is 26 ft. 6 inches by 31 ft. 6 inches

over all. Rooms are well arranged and two chambers can be finished in attic if desired. Our new book contains many pretty and low-cost designs. Large views, floor plans and descriptions. Sent for only 25 cts. Other books consist of



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CHEW...

Beeman's

THE ORIGINAL

Pepsin

Gum

Cures Indigestion and Sea-sickness.

All Others are Imitations.

For Sale at Every Drug Store

THE MOST ESSENTIAL FEATURE

OF A TYPEWRITER

first, last and all the time
is that it shall be an

Underwood.

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INVITATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

ENGRAVED IN PROPER FORM AND STYLE. Write for Our Samples and Prices.

JOHN B. WIGGINS COMPANY, 16-18 ADAMS ST., CHICAGO

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When You Look in Your Mirror Are You Satisfied?

**Any Woman Can Have
Good Health, a Refined
Face and Good Figure**

You will doubtless take up some special study this year—why not study to make yourself perfect in health and figure with a clear brain that you may be useful, attractive and a source of pleasure to your family, to your friends and to yourself?

Many a woman has surprised her husband and friends by giving 15 minutes a day in the privacy of her own room to special directions which I give her for the care of health, face and figure.

I study each woman's case just as a physician

My Method studies it, the only difference being that I strengthen and put in place weakened organs by exercise for nerves and muscles controlling such organs, bring a good circulation of warm, pure blood which I purify by teaching correct breathing and by prescribing the special diet, bathing, etc., adapted to each individual. I strengthen *all your vital organs, lungs, heart, nerve centers* and send your blood bounding through your veins as when a child. I *develop or reduce your figure* to correct proportions. I teach you to stand and to walk with an ease and dignity which at once bespeak culture and refinement.

Every figure can be rounded out *symmetrically* unless bones are missing or tissues entirely wasted away, and the woman who carries from 20 to 100 pounds of *superfluous flesh* every time she moves has my sympathy—but she does not need to do so—and surely it is every woman's privilege and duty to keep herself attractive and pleasing.

You Can Be Well Without Drugs

Drugs may relieve pain but they do not remove the cause of your difficulty. As women approach or pass middle life, they need more care in keeping a good circulation and the use of every faculty, so they may be useful and a pleasure to self and family. I have hundreds of pupils over 70 and a few over 80. Here are a few extracts from my morning mail:



Miss Corcroft at Her Desk

SUSANNA CORCROFT, Dept. 34, 57 Washington Street, CHICAGO
Author of "Growth in Silence," "Character as Expressed in the Body," Etc.

What My Pupils Say of My Work:
"My weight has increased thirty pounds."
"My kidneys are much better."
"My eyes are stronger and I have taken off my glasses."
"I have not had a sign of gall stones since I began your work."
"I weigh 83 lbs. less, and have gained wonderfully in strength."
"I am delighted with the effect of the exercise upon my catarrh."
"Just think of it! To be relieved from constipation. Entirely free after having it for 30 years."
"Have grown from a nervous wreck into a state of good, quiet nerves."

I will send you my little booklet on how to stand and to walk, free—every woman should have this, and if you will fill out the enclosed coupon I will tell you what I can do for you and I will send you extracts of letters from my pupils if I have helped similar cases. I do not give the name of a pupil unless she has given me permission to do so; every woman's letter is held in strict confidence. I will not work with you unless I feel I can help you. My advice and information in regard to my work are free. I wish you could read the reports from my pupils for one day—they would do your heart good, as they do mine.

For details about
**MY PERSONAL
INSTRUCTION**

mark with (XX) on blank below, opposite the points **MOST IMPORTANT** in your case and mark (X) opposite those which also interest you.

If there are any particulars in regard to your case which I should know, write about them fully and I will frankly tell you, without charge, what I can do for you.

Dept. 34

Thin bust
Thin chest
Thin arms
Thin neck
Round shoulders
Superfluous flesh
Prominent hips
Protruding abdomen
Height
Weight
Do you stand correctly
Complexion
Do you walk gracefully
Weakness
Lane back
Dullness
Irritability
Nerves
Headaches
Catarrh
Dizziness
Indigestion
Constipation
Liver
Kidneys
Lungs
Heart
Throat
Colds
Rheumatism
Circulation
Blood
Is your health or figure imperfect in any way not mentioned here?
Occupation?
What is your age?
Married or Single?

Name
Address

Fill out, cut off red mail this blank—NOW!

NOTE: Miss Corcroft, as President of Physical Culture Extension Work in America, needs no further introduction.

THIS BOOK IS FREE

"INVESTMENT TRUTHS"
By R.S. KENNEDY

An idle talk on idle money—
Written in my idle time—
To be read during an idle hour.

R.S. KENNEDY
51-537 West 24 St.,
NEW YORK CITY

**CLOGAU'S
ALCOHOL-GAS STOVE**
\$1. Express Paid

Can do everything and more than a gas stove does. **Indispensable** for nursery, sick-room, camping, shaving, curling, or flat iron; for tourists, boarders, light housekeeping, or wherever gas is not available or desirable. Vaporizes alcohol into gas, increasing its efficiency 8 times. Weighs but 8 oz. Consumes but a few cents' worth of alcohol an hour. Will boil a quart of water in 6 minutes. Smokeless and odorless. Uses either wood or grain alcohol—simple, can get out of order. Safe; will sustain weight of 100 lbs. Extinguishes instantly (blows out like a candle). **Non-explosive**. Solid Spun Brass and **NICKEL PLATED**. Sent anywhere. **Express paid**. Beware of dangerous imitations. Genuine is stamped with **OUR NAME**. Agents and Dealers Wanted.

Clogau & Co., 306 Dickey Bldg., Chicago

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THE SEQUEL TO
"Mr. Barnes of New York"
ENTITLED
"The Shadow of a Vendetta"
BEGINS IN THE
SEPTEMBER ISSUE
OF
GUNTER'S MAGAZINE

¶ Nineteen years ago "MR. BARNES OF NEW YORK" took the reading world by storm. It has been translated into every modern language, has been dramatized and played the world over.

¶ Its sales in English alone have amounted to over ten million copies. It is undoubtedly the greatest novel ever written.

¶ The sequel to this remarkable story, "THE SHADOW OF A VENDETTA," will be as vivid, as strong and as wonderful in its situations and as brilliantly embellished by vivacious comedy as was the first great part, "MR. BARNES OF NEW YORK," which without question has been the most widely read novel of any age.

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SUBSCRIPTION WITH THE OCTOBER NUMBER



Makes Blacking a Stove a Pleasure

X-Ray Stove Polish
is guaranteed to go twice as far as paste or liquid polishes. It gives a quick, brilliant lustre and

Does Not Burn Off

FREE SAMPLE. Address Dept. 19.

LAMONT, CORLISS & CO., Sole Agents, 78 Hudson St., New York

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(The same as I have shown over 4,000 others)

No matter where you are located or what your former occupation, if you are honest and ambitious, I will teach you the Real Estate, Insurance and General Brokerage Business thoroughly by mail, appoint you

SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE

of my Company (the largest in America), and assist you to become a prosperous and successful business man with an income of \$3,000 to \$5,000 annually.

Unusual opportunity for men without capital to become independent for life. Valuable book and full particulars FREE. Write today. Address either office.

EDWIN R. MARDEN, President
NAT'L CO-OPERATIVE REALTY CO.

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Chicago, Ill. Washington, D. C.

ALBRECHT FURS at MAKER'S PRICES



You can get maker's prices on your furs and save the dealer's profits by sending two 2c stamps for the New Albrecht Mail Order Fur Catalogue No. 600. It illustrates and describes over 100 exclusive styles for the winter's wear. It gives you a wider assortment to choose from—newer, fresher, more beautifully finished furs and better quality.

You see we buy the raw skins direct from the trappers, make them up in our own workrooms in the newest and most exclusive styles and sell them direct to you.

The photograph illustrates Model 42, one of the Albrecht exclusive styles in neckwear, lined with best satin, guaranteed prime fur, just as styled. In Japanese Mink, \$7.50; Blended Sable Squirrel, \$7.25; Persian Paw, \$5.85. Genuine British Columbia Mink, \$16.25. Sent express prepaid on receipt of price. Money promptly refunded if not found perfectly satisfactory.

Let us show the other styles, and explain the advantages of buying furs The Albrecht Way. Write today for Catalogue No. 6000.

E. ALBRECHT & SON, Station V, Sixth & Minnesota Sts., St. Paul, Minn.

Mr. Edison Says:

"I want to see a Phonograph in every American Home."

An offer open to every responsible person.



No Money Down!

Free Trial

The Edison, the genuine Edison!—positively on free trial in your own home! No C. O. D.—no guarantee required. If acceptable pay lowest cash price at 50 Cts. a Week (larger installments for larger outfits) without even interest on payments buys a genuine Edison outfit!

Remember—nothing down—no C. O. D.—we want you to see the great Edison outfit and compare it with any of the imitation machines sold at many times the price of the Edison outfit.

WRITE TODAY for the great Edison catalogue and full explanation of this wonderful offer—free prepaid.

FREDERICK BABSON,

Edison Phonograph Distributor.

149-150 Michigan Ave., Suite 1377 Chicago

The Humphrey

Two Stoves—
a giant heater
and a
cooker—
in one.



This dome lifts off, leaving a perfect cooking stove.

is guaranteed to be the most economical gas heating stove made, and the only one that forces the heat out along the floor where most needed.

\$2.50

AT ALL DEALERS

or express prepaid from us. Made of copper plated, die-pressed steel, all heavily, beautifully nickel.

10 Days Trial

The saving quickly pays for the stove.

Order a stove to-day. If for any reason you are dissatisfied with your purchase, return it at our expense and get your money back. Catalogs free. Write today.

HUMPHREY CO. — Dept. A 10 — KALAMAZOO, MICH.

Largest Manufacturers Instantaneous Water Heaters in the World. Write for Water Heater Catalog.

Ainslee's for November

"THE MAGAZINE THAT ENTERTAINS"

The table of contents of AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE for November will be filled with material for the diversion of its readers. It will be one of the best numbers that we have ever put together. AINSLEE'S has its chosen field to itself, for it is the only magazine the avowed function of which is *to entertain*. Other magazines have various missions, but *entertainment* is left to AINSLEE'S.

The best story of its kind that has been given to the public in years is the novelette. It is by **BARONESS ORCZY**, who has made a great hit with two books, "The Scarlet Pimpernel" and "A Son of the People." Her new story, which has been secured for AINSLEE'S, is called "*Beau Brocade*." It is a stirring romance, full of color, with intense dramatic action and beautifully written. It is a most absorbing tale.

H. B. Marriott-Watson, who, as our readers know, is a master in short story writing, will have a unique story, called "*The Prince's Pictures*," telling of a contest between Yankee wit and British persistency.

Kate Jordan, will have, in "*The Feet of Youth*," a stirring tale of studio life in New York.

Some of the other contributors of fiction will be **Eleanor Hoyt Brainerd**, **Joseph C. Lincoln**, **Mary Moss**, **Constance Smedley**, **Caroline Duer**, **Francis Metcalfe** and **Sarah Guernsey Bradley**.

Margaret Sutton Briscoe will have a very engaging essay on "*The Feminine of Graft*," and **Lady Broome** on "*Anglo-American Marriages*."

Channing Pollock will have an interesting discussion of some of the new theatrical offerings.

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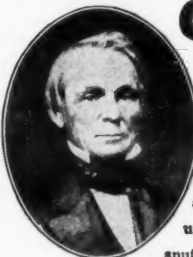
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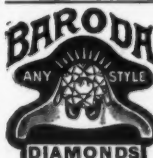
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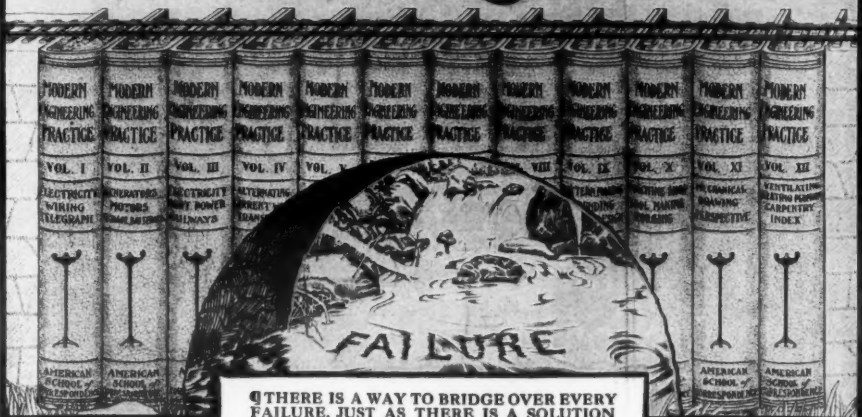
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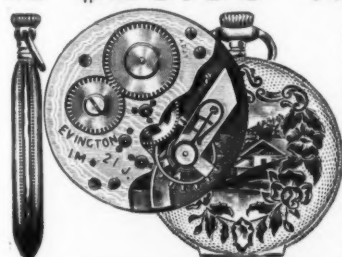


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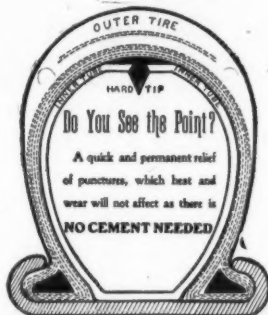
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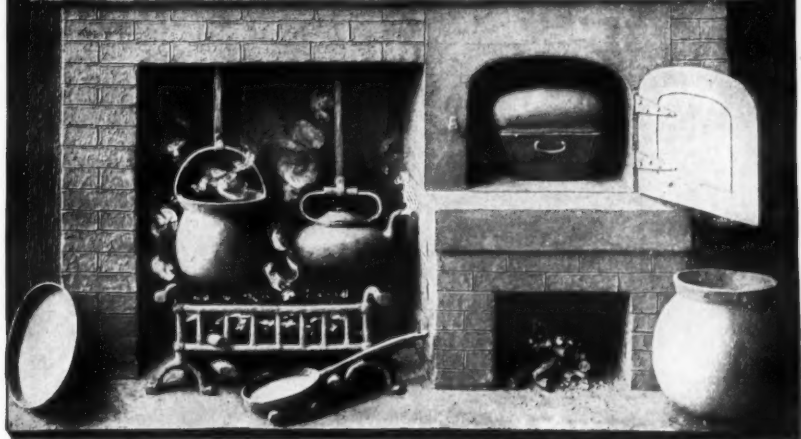
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